CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS.

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BY

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Within the Four Seas all are brethren.

Confucian Analects, XII, v. 4.

The proper study of mankind is Man.

Pope.

The scientific study of Man is the most difficult of all branches of knowledge.

O. W. Holmes.

We are firm believers in the maxim that for all right judgment of any man or thing, it is useful, nay essential, to see his good qualities before pronouncing on his bad.

Carlyle.

CONTENTS OF THE CHAPTERS.

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INTRODUCTION.

A WITNESS when put upon the stand is expected to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Many witnesses concerning the Chinese have told the truth, but perhaps few of them have succeeded in telling nothing but the truth, and no one of them has ever told the whole truth. No single individual, whatever the extent of his knowledge, could by any possibility know the whole truth about the Chinese. The present volume of essays is therefore open to objection from three different points of view. First, it may be said that the attempt to convey to others an idea of the real characteristics of the Chinese, is vain.

Mr. George Wingrove Cooke, the China correspondent of the *London Times* in 1857-58, enjoyed as good an opportunity of seeing the Chinese under varied circumstances, and through the eyes of those well qualified to help him to a just understanding of the people, as any writer on China up to that time. In the preface to his published letters, Mr. Cooke apologizes as follows for his failure to describe the Chinese character: "I have, in these letters, introduced no elaborate essay upon Chinese character. It is a great omission. No theme could be more tempting, no subject could afford wider scope for ingenious hypothesis, profound generalisation, and triumphant dogmatism. Every small critic will probably utterly despise me for not having made something out of such opportunities. The truth is, that I have written several very fine characters for the whole Chinese race, but having

the misfortune to have the people under my eye at the same time with my essay, they were always saying something or doing something which rubbed so rudely against my hypothesis, that in the interest of truth I burnt several successive letters. I may add that I have often talked over this matter with the most eminent and candid sinologues, and have always found them ready to agree with me as to the impossibility of a conception of Chinese character as a whole. These difficulties, however, occur only to those who know the Chinese practically; a smart writer, entirely ignorant of the subject, might readily strike off a brilliant and antithetical analysis, which should leave nothing to be desired but truth. Some day, perhaps, we may acquire the necessary knowledge to give to each of the glaring inconsistencies of a Chinaman's mind its proper weight and influence in the general mass. At present, I, at least, must be content to avoid strict definitions, and to describe a Chinaman by his most prominent qualities."

Within the past thirty years, the Chinese has made himself a factor in the affairs of many lands. He is seen to be irrepressible; is felt to be incomprehensible. He cannot, indeed, be rightly understood in any country but China, yet the impression still prevails that he is a bundle of contradictions who cannot be understood at all. But after all there is no apparent reason now that several hundred years of our acquaintance with China have elapsed, why what is actually known of its people should not be co-ordinated, as well as any other combination of complex phenomena.

A more serious objection to this particular volume is that the author has no adequate qualifications for writing it. The circumstance that a person has lived for eighteen years in China is no more a guarantee that he is competent to write of the characteristics of the Chinese, than the fact that another man has for eighteen years been buried in a silver mine, is a proof that he is a fit person to compose a treatise on metallurgy, or on bi-metallism. China is a vast whole, and one who has never even visited more than half its provinces, and who has lived in but two of them, is certainly not entitled to generalise for the whole Empire. These papers were originally prepared for the *North-China Daily News* of Shanghai, with no reference to any wider circulation. Some

of the topics treated excited, however, so much interest, not only in China, but also in Great Britain, in the United States, and in Canada, that the publishers have been asked to reproduce the articles in a more permanent form.

A third objection, which will be offered by some, is that parts of the views here presented, especially those which deal with the moral character of the Chinese, are misleading and unjust.

The long interval between the first publication of these essays and their republication has afforded opportunity not only for very considerable additions, but also for ascertaining the opinions in regard to the subjects treated of many old residents of China, whose knowledge of the Chinese is very much greater than that of the writer. While some have expressed themselves as in substantial accord with the views here presented; there are others who, readily admit the substantial truth of all that has been advanced, but who think that certain good traits, of the Chinese, such as cheerfulness, faithfulness, love of home, and sociability, have not received sufficient recognition. That this is a just criticism will be found fully acknowledged in the concluding chapter. Should the reader, as he proceeds, find himself impelled to defend the Chinese, he will be much more likely to come at the real truth, than if he accepted every statement unchallenged.

There can be no valid excuse for withholding credit from the Chinese for any one of the many good qualities which they possess and exhibit. At the same time, there is a danger of yielding to *à priori* considerations, and giving the Chinese credit for a higher practical morality than they can justly claim—an evil not less serious than indiscriminate condemnation. It is related of Thackeray, that he was once asked how it happened that the good people in his novels were always stupid, and the bad people clever. To this the great satirist replied that he had no brains above his eyes. There is a wood-cut representing an oak tree, in the outlines of which the observer is invited to detect a profile of Napoleon in the island of St. Helena, standing with bowed head and folded arms. Protracted contemplation frequently fails to discover any such profile, and we think there must be some mistake, but when once it is clearly pointed out, it is impossible to look at the picture and not see the Napoleon too. In like

manner, many things are to be seen in China, which do not at first appear, and many of them once seen are never forgotten.

While it has been impossible to introduce a qualifying clause in every sentence which is general in its form, the reader is expressly warned that these papers are not intended to be generalisations for a whole Empire, nor yet comprehensive abstracts of what foreigners have observed and experienced. What they are intended to be is merely a notation of the impression which has been made upon one observer, by a few out of many "Chinese Characteristics." They are not meant as a portrait of the Chinese people, but rather as mere outline sketches in charcoal of some features of the Chinese people, as they have been seen by that one observer. Taken together, they constitute only a single ray, of which an indefinite number are required to form a complete beam of white light. They may also be considered as studies in induction, in which many particulars taken from the experience not of the writer only, but of various other individuals at various times, are grouped. From a sufficient number of these particulars, a general principle is inferred. The inferences may be doubted or denied, but such particulars as are cited cannot, for that reason alone, be set aside, being so far as they go truthful, and they must ultimately be reckoned with in any theory of the Chinese character.

In one of his essays, the late Mr. Stent made the observation that in the present stage of our intercourse with Chinese, there are three ways in which we can come to some knowledge of their social life, by the study of their novels, their ballads, and their plays. Each of these sources of information doubtless has its worth, but there is likewise a fourth, more valuable than all of them combined, a source not open to all who write on China and the Chinese. It is the study of the family life of the Chinese in their own homes. As the topography of a district can be much better understood in the country than in the city, so is it with the characteristics of the people. A foreigner may live in a Chinese city for a decade, and not gain as much knowledge of the interior life of the people, as he can acquire by living twelve months in a Chinese village. We must regard the village as the unit of Chinese social life, and it is therefore from the stand-point of a Chinese village that these papers have been written. They are of

purpose not intended to represent the point of view of a missionary, but that of an observer not consciously prejudiced, who simply reports what he sees. For this reason, no reference is made to any characteristics of the Chinese, as they may be modified by Christianity. It is not assumed that the Chinese need Christianity at all, but if it appears that there are grave defects in their character, it is a fair question how those defects may be remedied.

The "Chinese question," as already remarked, is now far more than a national one. It is international. There is reason to think that in the twentieth century, it will be an even more pressing question than at present. The problem of the means by which so vast a part of the human race may be improved, cannot be without interest to any one who wishes well to mankind. If the conclusions to which we may find ourselves led are correct, they will be supported by a line of argument heretofore too much neglected. If these conclusions are wrong, they will, however supported, fall of themselves.

It is many years since Lord Elgin's well-known reply to an address from the merchants of Shanghai, but his words are true and pertinent to-day. "When the barriers which prevent free access to the interior of the country shall have been removed, Christian civilisation of the West will find itself face to face not with barbarism, but with an ancient civilisation in many respects effete and imperfect but in others not without claims to our sympathy and respect. In the rivalry which will then ensue, Christian civilisation will have to win its way among a sceptical and ingenious people, by making it manifest that a faith which reaches to heaven furnishes better guarantees for public and private morality than one which does not rise above the earth."

CHAPTER I.

UNITY IN VARIETY—VARIETY IN UNITY.

SIR RUTHERFORD ALCOCK remarks of Japanese temples, that they much resemble negroes, which are indistinguishable from one another except on a close inspection, for which no one is anxious. To the casual traveller in China, the vast crowds which he everywhere sees about him, seem almost devoid of individuality. The teeming millions appear like a hive of bees, like a nest of ants, like a swarm of insects in the air. They are totally unlike any other people on the planet, but their queues, their costumes, their countenances, while differentiating them from the rest of the human race, serve to confound them one with another. Nor does lengthening the base line of observation make discrimination more easy. Even to an observant and experienced stranger, the men of Canton, of Foochow, of Shanghai, and of Tientsin seem very much alike. Perhaps he remarks that as one goes north, physical stature increases, but it would not be strange if he noted almost nothing else. The people are all alike Chinese, and why should they not look and be alike? But if our observant and sagacious traveller settles down into a permanent resident—especially if he is favoured with opportunities of living in many different cities and in many provinces, he soon perceives that the superficial notions of the likeness of the Chinese between themselves, are wholly mistaken. The men of the central provinces are very unlike the men of the south, unlike in physical appearance, in speech, in temper. Both are very unlike the men of the north, and once discriminated, they are never again mistaken for each other. The Chinese habit, hereditary for ages, of reverting to one's native province and native village, considering that alone to be "home" where one's ancestors are buried, has crystallised different types of Chinese character into lines rigid as adamant.

There is a character in one of Richter's novels, who assumes the first meridian to lie through his own skull. Every Chinese unconsciously does the same. His own village, his own district, his own prefecture, province and country are *his*, all others are "outside." (What possible objection by the way can there be to the Chinese terming foreigners "outside countrymen," when this is the idiom by which they speak of their own countrymen in relation to every territorial division less than a country, and by which they themselves are spoken of by other Chinese?) But the Chinese do not simply regard other provincials as outsiders, they treat them with undisguised contempt. The shrewd trader and skilful artificer who lives in Canton, thinks of those who come from the northern part of the Empire as northern barbarians, but his contempt is returned in overflowing measure by the men of the north, who always think and speak of the Foochow and Canton men, as southern barbarians. Both of them unite in ridiculing their long-headed, but often ill-favoured neighbours who hail from Shansi, whose hands are against every man, and every man's hand against them, but who always seem to prosper, "caring not for life, but for gain."

This appears to be a general principle throughout the Empire —a Chinese is never regarded as a "brother," because he hails from some point within the "four seas," but as an alien and a stranger, because his province is an "outside" one. And if this is true of those of pure Chinese race, much more is it true as between them and the strange people who have at some distant time poured into China in vast floods, and are now settled in little communities or in large ones through many of the richest parts of the Empire. At first sight, a Mohammedan is simply a Chinese, and nothing more. His dress, his occupation, his habits, language and general environment suggest nothing of alienage. His weddings, his funerals, and his diet may differ, but these are not vital points. But on a closer examination the Mohammedans are seen to be in a condition of mechanical, as distinguished from chemical, union with the Chinese. They are not Chinese, never were, and never will be, and no one expects it or supposes it possible that they should be.

These are the aspects in which a resident as distinguished from a traveller sees China. Many peoples, not one. Many

"languages," many customs, a brood of a hundred (but not assimilated) peoples, united by a common literature, history and government, still essentially different.

Yet this view of China and the Chinese may rightly be criticised as misleading and inadequate. Notwithstanding the wide variations in provincial types, and despite differences due to local causes, the more China is contemplated in the relations of all its parts to each other, the more China is felt to be a unit. Few travellers have enjoyed the opportunity of passing through *all* the eighteen or twenty provinces of this vast land, but we are much mistaken, if in the minds of those who have travelled most widely, the sense of China as an essential unity is not stronger than the sense of her disunity. A wise instructor of youth cautioned his pupils when they became travellers, to observe what things were "taken for granted." In some provinces of China two story-houses are the rule, and in others only thatch. In some, the final consonants are sounded and in others there are none; in some, trade leads, and in others, agriculture; in some there are bleak winters, and in others mild, but we must believe that what we already know of China, and what is every day more and more coming to light, tends to show, that what the Chinese people, as a whole, take for granted, is the same. If this view of China be the correct one, of which we have not the least doubt, it suggests important inferences bearing upon the future of this great race. China is in urgent need of reforms; of this there can be no possible doubt. It is beginning to seem, even to those of by no means optimistic habits of thinking, that reforms may be possible—even in China. The movement thitherward is "in the air." It can not be stopped. Perhaps within the present century, China may have passed through transformations greater than any since the days of Ch'in Shih-huang, the unifier of her petty states. Will she hold together? Will she move as a whole, or like some huge iceberg, break up into fractions and disappear? We have faith to believe that the cohesive forces of China are stronger than the disruptive ones, and that as a vast unit China will yet take her place among the mighty nations of the earth.

CHAPTER II.

SOLIDARITY.

AMONG the Anglo-Saxon race the idea extensively prevails, that each man is an individual by bimself and is to be dealt with as such. It does not follow because a man is a banker, that his son is to pursue that business—or any other. No profession, no trade, no pursuit of any kind is hereditary. The son of a Conservative may be a Liberal, and the son of a Liberal a Tory. Apart from that general sense, in which solidarity may be predicated of all human society, we in the West have very little which can be connoted under that term. The individual is the social unit.

In China all is quite different. Ancestry is reckoned a long way back with definite terms for each generation. Relationships are complicated and precise, with a complexity and precision which to a stranger are bewildering and confounding. The social fact of capital importance, that each Chinese family is practically rooted to the spot where it exists, and that it always has been so rooted, is of itself well nigh incomprehensible to the roving Occidental, who has visited half the countries on the globe, not improbably with a view to a settlement. Chinese social life runs in grooves, or rather in ruts, and in very ancient ruts. A man in China is a part of a gigantic social machine, a mere cog in one of many wheels, and from ancient times, until now, it has always been customary for the wheels to move the cogs, never for the cog to control the wheels. In fact the mere mass to be moved makes it impossible for any particular part to move any family as a whole, except in lines and on planes to which the social machinery is already adjusted. A Chinese family is like a hill of potatoes—one cannot get at any of them, without a process by which all are brought to view. The shrewdly practical ancients, who laid out the plan on which the Chinese race was to be governed,

understood perfectly this characteristic of their people and have used it to the utmost. The Empire, is (theoretically) a vast whole with a head who governs by the decree of heaven. Each gradation from the Empire as a whole, down to the individual and collective family, is likewise a unit, of which the parts are mutually inter-dependent and mutually responsible for each other. To what an extent this theory and practice of responsibility for others is pushed, we are continually reminded not less by the occurrences in daily Chinese life, than by the acts recorded in the singularly self-revealing documents published in the *Peking Gazette.* Let the reader run through a year of this unique publication, and mentally compare—or rather contrast—the principles which evidently rule in the adjustment of cases, whether arising from the destructive outburst of the Yellow River, or from a flagrant case of parricide, with Western ideas. He will have an instructive series of pictures of the practical workings of the Chinese theory of solidarity. But it is not alone in the natural relationship, or in the more artificial political ones, that Chinese solidarity is manifested. There seems to be in the Chinese nature an inherent capacity for combination, united with a powerful tendency to combine, which it might be difficult to equal in any other race. Guilds are inventions by no means peculiar to China, but where are there any trade guilds with stronger cohesive powers, than those in China? There seems, in fact, to be not cohesion simply, but a kind of chemical union. In the presence of such enormous forces of attraction the foreigner is helpless, baffled and outwitted by a quality which operates like the pressure of the atmosphere, equally in all directions, and which it seems equally hopeless to resist. There are occasionally collisions of guilds with guilds, and in dealing with them Occidental machinery and modes of procedure are practically worthless. Such conflicts render the government of colonies like the Straits Settlements and Hongkong, a matter of extreme delicacy and difficulty. Nor need one go to the remote confines of the Empire, to secure illustrations of the principle which we have named. We find them in too abundant measure in our own places of business, and in our own domestic service. A compradore, a cook, a "boy," a coolie, comes to some (invisible) crisis of his career, and deserts us. Of the nine reasons which he may not improbably assign for this step, eight will have

no relevancy whatever, and the ninth will not be the real clue. It is impossible, in fact, to ascertain exactly why he does as he does. Perhaps he does not know himself. But one thing he knows, which is that he must go. And he goes. The truth is, that in the occult social machinery of which he is a part, he has been in the course of many revolutions, pressed upon by another cog and is thrown "out of gear." A Chinese is always a part of the machine—not the machine itself. Or if he be a very important wheel and turn the rest, then solidarity impressively asserts itself in a new form. We have heard of Chinese joint-stock companies in which solidarity had a great deal too much to do. In fact, solidarity in a Chinese sense, and individual equality in an Occidental sense are scarcely compatible. This essential and significant quality of Chinese society is of great consequence in estimating the future of Chinese reformations. As long as China remains in the condition in which she has been for so many ages, solidarity is the incarnation of inertia. But if she is beginning to exhibit signs of what the late Marquis Tsêng called an "awakening," there is hope that if once awake she will be wide awake. She cannot rouse herself from the lethargy of centuries in a day nor in a decade. Nor when she is awake will she bestow, let us hope, her principal energies,—as the Marquis seemed to expect—on material resources such as arsenals and navies, but rather on intellectual and moral regeneration, and the rehabilitation of the energies which once made China great, and through which alone she can hope to recover her greatness, and place herself among the foremost nations of the time.

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY.

Of the solidarity of the Chinese people as a whole, we have already spoken. We have now to consider a similar characteristic in the constituent parts of Chinese society, as related to one another. It is difficult for a Western accustomed to a state of society in which everything is in a more or less fluid state, to conceive the conditions of Chinese society, where everything and every person is in a fixed and generally unaltered position. In a Western land, although residents of the same village may be all acquainted with one another, their interest in each other's affairs is seldom keen, except in the case of those who are by nature gossips, and who make it a business to collect and to disseminate small items of news concerning their neighbours. There is no obstacle to an indefinite inquisition into the affairs of our neighbour, if we are so disposed. His house is open, and his yard exposed. But as a rule, most of us in Occidental countries have much more interesting themes of conversation than purely personal and local affairs. The daily newspaper brings the whole world to our breakfast table, and in the presence of the Irish Land question, the impending war between Germany and France, the Turkish and the Egyptian questions, and a multitude of others, our neighbour's quarrel with his coachman, or the discharge of an angry cook, lose their relish as matters of thought and discussion. In China all is quite different, every house is surrounded by a high wall, and has no windows to the street. The first impression is that extreme seclusion and privacy must be the rule. The Oriental idea seems to be to imitate the exclusive snail, and to retire within oneself, leaving the baffled world wondering in the street, as to what is going on behind the dead walls and barred doors. But a very short acquaintance with Chinese life suffices to

show that walls have ears, and that what goes on within, is as well known, as if it were daily proclaimed from the housetops. In China a "private house" is unknown. Anyone can go anywhere, and if there is the least provocation, he will do so. In a dense population, a crowd is easily collected anywhere. Each one of that crowd is not simply curious, but he has a belief that to know what is going on, is not simply a right (of which no doubt ever entered the mind of any one), but a stern duty, and a duty which he will fulfil. The incessant intrusion of the rabble not only, but of well dressed and perhaps scholarly Chinese, into the "private house" into which a foreigner has entered, is looked upon as an inevitable incident. No one thinks of objecting to it, any more than he would object to the entrance of the sunlight when the door has to be left open. And in Oriental countries the doors must not be closed, lest there be bad talk. "What is going on within that he dare not admit his fellow-townsmen?" The Anglo-Saxon question to an intruder would be: "What business have you here?" The Oriental reply would be: "What business have you to keep me out?" It is evident that the Anglo-Saxon, and the Chinese proceed upon social theories which differ radically. There are no newspapers in China. There are no objects of general and human interest to attract attention, except what is local and personal, and these are, therefore, the staple objects of thought and of conversation. Every Chinese individual, as already remarked, is a mere cog in a vast system of machinery. He has relatives beyond all count or remembrance. His wife has as many more. His married children add to the ever widening circle. By the time he is sixty years of age, a man is related to hundreds upon hundreds of individuals, each of whom is entirely conscious of the relationship, and does not (as is often, the case in Occidental lands) forget or ignore it. Not only do all this army of relatives feel themselves entitled to know all the details of one's affairs, but the relatives of the relatives—a swarm branching into infinity—will perhaps do the same. If the man is a magistrate, or is rich, they will certainly do it. One cannot make a business trip to sell water-melons, to buy mules, to collect a debt, of which everyone will not speedily know all that is to be known. Chinese memories are treasure houses of everything relative to cash, and to dates. How much land each man owns,

when acquired, when pawned, and when redeemed, how much was expended at the funeral of his mother, and at the wedding of his son, how the daughter-in-law is liked at the village into which she has married, the amount of her dowery, what bargain was made with the firm that let the bridal chair, all these items and a thousand more, everybody knows, and never forgets. To know them is, we repeat, a social duty. If you are travelling, and your driver waters his animals, the chance pedestrian whom he never saw before, and whom he may never see again, halts to inquire where you are coming from, where bound, and how much is to be paid for the journey. A beggar, to whom you have given a couple of *cash*, will be promptly interviewed to ascertain the extent of your contribution. Every brawl of every kind, sooner or later, comes to the street, and the ins and outs are all known. The peace-maker volunteers his services, because he perfectly understands both sides of all cases, and is impartial. Though two men at a fair may do their bargaining with their fingers concealed in their capacious sleeves, it will go hard if the neighbours do not discover the terms at last. If this is the case with private concerns, how much more with public affairs. There are no secrets in China. Everybody crowds in everywhere—if not in sight, then "behind the arras." Everyone who can get access to them reads every dispatch he can see. He reads "private" letters in the same way. "What!" one exclaims, "not let one see?" There must be treasons, stratagems and spoils, in anything which is not accessible to everyone.

This state of things is not only almost imcomprehensible to the foreigner, but often highly exasperating. It should remind him, however, to be always on his guard. We are surrounded by a silent swarm of spectators, who often seem unconscious of our existence. But they are silent only in our presence, they are not unconscious at all. Everything is noted; what one knows is soon known universally. The wise Chinese adage applies to us all: "If you would not have it known that you do it, do not do it."

CHAPTER IV.

FACE.

At first sight, nothing can be more irrational than to call that which is shared with the entire human race, a "characteristic" of the Chinese. But the word "face" in China, does not signify simply the front part of the head, but is literally a "compound noun of multitude," with more meanings than we shall be able to describe, or perhaps, even to comprehend. Sometimes it signifies the exhibition to spectators—for the Chinese is always supposed to be in the presence of on-lookers—of certain conditions which lead others to do him honour. In this point of view it is nearly synonymous with "fame, or reputation" *(ming)*, but the idea of the scenic effect is never absent. (A departing mandarin, who has a tablet presented to him, receives "face" by such a gift. Anything which is spontaneously proffered, and which could not be exacted, gives the recipient an amount of "face" proportioned to the importance of the gift, and of those presenting it.) But since reciprocity is inherent in presentation, it is of the first consequence that everything so given should be not simply acknowledged, but acknowledged suitably. Few foreigners would presume to decide as to what constitutes a suitable acknowledgement of a Chinese gift. But not to acknowledge it in a suitable way, would be not simply to nullify the effect of the gift, but it would cause the recipient to "lose face." Into the complicated labyrinth of what may be a suitable acknowledgment of a Chinese present, most foreigners who have much to do with the Chinese, are sooner or later sure to be enticed. A gift cannot be entirely declined. It cannot always be declined in part—especially if it be a new-year caller with a bunch of artificial flowers, and a salutation; so the coolie who brings it to the door of the consul, is paid a Mexican dollar for his trouble. The coolie is happy, but the consul is

exasperated. Yet he does not wish to lose face, and so he submits to the extortion. To decline a gift especially prepared, such as a tablet, or even a simple pair of scrolls, might give great offence, unless it is done while the matter is still in embryo—and this for obvious reasons is generally impossible. In a case within our knowledge, a few Chinese resolved to present a foreigner with a token of this sort, which the foreigner resolved not to accept. When a single step has been taken in the affair, it is too late according to Chinese ideas to decline, for the will of the many must be respected. So the inscription was bought, and arrangements were made to present it, when, to the dismay of the donors, the obstinate foreigner, who had not enjoyed the advantage of an education of which a book of propriety is a part, absolutely refused to receive it. Here was a case of the irresistible projectile, impinging against an invulnerable target. The present could not go back, and the crass foreigner would not receive it. In this crisis the middle-man, through whom the business had thus far proceeded, consented to take charge of it, with the concurrence of both parties, the would-be givers, and the would-not-be receiver. After a certain lapse of time, the obnoxious present was surreptitiously sent to the premises of the (theoretically unwilling) recipient, and thrust into an unused drawer. Thus the donors had sent it—somewhere, while the recipient (theoretically) never received it, and what is of chief importance, the "face" of both parties was saved!

In a great range of cases constantly occurring in Chinese social relations, "face" is not synonymous with honour, much less wlth reputation, but it is a technical expression so indicate a certain relation instinctively perceived by a Chinese, but almost incomprehensible to the poor foreigner. The knight in Chinese chess has the same diagonal movement as in the western game—one square forward, and two side-wise—or *vice versa.* But if there happen to be a piece on the square lying at the inner angle of the knight's move, he cannot stir. This, we are informed, is because the other piece "tangles" the horse's legs. Like the invisible check, is the mysterious something which enables a person to recover "face." Suppose, for example, the question is about the property of a widow, against whose disposition of it, some one has entered a lawsuit, though it clearly lies in the widow's full power, there

being no heirs, the magistrate inclines to the side of the objectors, and having ascertained that no certain proof of the death of the widow's husband (though deceased for fifteen years) is available, he confirms the disposition of the property, with this significant proviso, that *if* the husband turns up again, the property shall be his! This saves the face of the prosecutor, and leaves him with a drawn game. The most cursory perusal of the reports of commissions appointed to examine into the conduct of officials, as presented in the *Peking Gazette*, illustrates the force of fees in the saving of face. "We find, they say in effect, to take a recent instance, that the officer was innocent; he did quite right, and all the suspicious circumstances may be explained in natural and easy ways. (For which verdict Tls. 5,000 may have been received). *But*, as A.B. did not maintain so high a quality of virtue as to *prevent himself being talked about we recommend depriving him of his button, and retention at his post.* In this way a careful balance of "face" is maintained all around.

For a servant to be summarily dismissed, is perhaps regarded as a disgrace, certainly a loss of "face." If he has wind of the intention, he will very likely save his "face," by refusing to perform some simple task, raise a storm over a trifle, retire in triumph, with his "face" intact. One dead to shame has a "thick face" or has the skin of his forehead dissected off (as in the punishment of *ling-ch'ih*,) so as to hide his face. To save one's "face" and lose one's head, would not seem so attractive to an Occidental as to a Chinese. Yet we have heard of a district magistrate who was allowed as a special favour, to be beheaded in his robes of office, in order to *save his face!*

CHAPTER V.

THE FACULTY OF ABSORBING.

A FORMER Consul at one of the river ports was accustomed to tell of an experiment which he instituted, to prove to a sceptical friend, that the person who acted as "boy" at the Consulate was strictly honest. A large box of cigars was exposed in one of the rooms of which the boy had charge, and the contents accurately counted. The superficial arrangement was studiously contrived so that a cigar could not be taken without disturbing the order. The next day the cigars were privately counted; but though they had not been disturbed, the number failed to reach the census of the day before by one cigar. The Consul thought this an unfortunate accident, and repeated the experiment for a week, with the same result, on each several day. What we have now to say on the Chinese faculty for "absorption," relates to phenomena of a different sort. Everyone has noticed that after a rain, the water stands in puddles on the ground, and everyone has noticed that after a still further lapse of time, it does not continue to stand on the ground. This is said to be due to absorption. Everyone knows that when camphor is put away with flannel in the spring, it cannot be found in the autumn. It has been absorbed. Everyone is aware that all the rivers in the world are kept filled from the great sea, simply by the power of absorption. There was once a time when the "Foreigner in Far Cathay" was a common enemy. That time has forever gone, and the foreigner is now a common friend of all the people about him, for the reason that he has what they all want, and has an abundance of it. We do not refer, as already explained, to the valuables of the foreigner. Of these he soon learns to be careful, and puts them in the charge of the boy, or other factotum, and as a rule, excellent care is taken of them all. And if at any time, any of them should

be missing, thanks to the system of responsibility, the missing articles can generally either be made to appear, or the loss made good. Every foreign establishment has a great variety of articles of no special value in themselves, and often of no value at all—to their owner, but much prized by the Chinese. Such are the empty tins, which ought to accumulate in mounds, but which never do accumulate, for the reason that they undergo absorption by the Chinese, to whom they are most useful. The same thing happens to wrappings or casings of all sorts. Canvas bags, in which rice and coffee once reposed, are things of but short life. Boxes disappear, used "for kindling;" kerosine tins, so unsightly to the foreign gaze, are less repulsive to that of his common friends, the Chinese. His mats are just the thing for unnumbered uses, and they gently fade, like a summer's twilight. His stock of benches, provided for some special emergency, gets visibly smaller. They have been (temporarily) "borrowed," like Johnson's sixpence, *not* to be returned. Diligent enquiry, if begun betimes, will lead to the recovery of a certain per cent. of them, but not to the recovery of all. They were "borrowed" under circumstances of peculiar need, by a friend of a friend of the boy's brother-in-law. He will look for them, and get them back, "chop chop." The poles on which summer mat-shed depend are not all in their place, at the advent of the warm breath of early summer. The coolie does not know who could have removed them—neither do you. But there is one thing which both of you do know perfectly well, which is that you will never see those particular poles again. The same process of more or less gradual disappearance takes place in the kitchens of all of us, the only difference being that some of us are aware of it, and some of us are not. Every now and again some special article is not to be found. The boy has nothing to do with it, and the cook has been changed and he never saw it at all. A change of servants is a good time to take account of all varieties of household stock. The water jars are apparently short in number, but the servants never lend such things, and think one was taken by a foreign neighbour. The grass and weeds in your yard are kindly gathered for you, by persons whose presence you do not desire, and not improbably at time when your attention is on other things. Your friends assist

in getting in your flower crop, not stealthily, but openly and above board. You hesitate to roar at a well dressed Chinese, who helps himself to some of the fruit which he happens to espy, as he is leaving your premises; but for the moment, you consider him peculiar. He is not at all so, it is you who are peculiar, for the customs of the Flowery Land are in some respects, a trifle relaxed, and this is an example. A friend of ours was called on by some Chinese, when he was not at home, but this was of no consequence—a mere matter of detail—as the leader of the party was himself quite "at home" in the foreign house. When the host returned, it was to find the Chinese visitors, led by the gentleman who was on very intimate terms, in one of the closets, where they were admiring some fine specimens of foreign onions, to a string of which one of the strangers helped himself, laying it down by the side of his chair till his departure. The foreigner was a trifle annoyed—as foreigners have a way of being—and when all the Chinese party happened to step out for a moment, he calmly took the onions, replaced them in the closet, locked the door, and removed the key. When the guests rose to go, one of them felt for the onions, and not finding them, was much perplexed. The moment he reached home, he sent his servant with a card, begging for three onions! There is nothing like getting used to things. It was remarked by one of wide observation that one can get used to almost anything except being struck by lightning. When you are aware that some one is in ambush, trying to cultivate your land, you will specify that you do not wish it cultivated, except under your direction. If you take pains to explain to the washing coolie, that you do *not* desire to have him wear your under flannels, while they are in his care, he will perhaps take the hint, and wear those of other people instead. But be assured, whatever your precautions, that you can never escape the Chinese faculty for absorption. The unconscious motto of the Chinaman is the refrain of the old Scotch song, "All that's thine, is mine, Jeannie." When, therefore, you find your property innocently "annexed," as the Americans say, remember, if you can, that it is not lost, but only gone before, and that within the four seas, all are brethren, especially the foreigner.

Let us close with a little good advice. Do not have so many things, and there will not be so much that other

people want. Be vigilant. Foreign carelessness invites Chinese "annexation." Try and be philosophical. It is said not to be so hard to take things as they come, as to part with them as they go. Emulate the sturdy heroism of the Kentuckian, who had but one shirt, so that on the occasion of its being washed, he was obliged to go to bed. While thus engaged, an enterprising calf found the garment, and ate it up. On hearing of his misfortune, the philosophical owner remarked "Them as has, must lose."

CHAPTER VI.

EATING.

At a certain railway station in a Western land, which it might be invidious to name, the railway officials are in the habit of shouting out at fixed times the announcement, "Five minutes for refreshments." In a conspicuous position is placed the following legend, which must be intended to operate on the mind of the traveller, "Five minutes is a long time, *if you use every second!*" It would be difficult to select any single sentence of equal length which more strikingly indicates the difference between Occidental civilisation, and that of China, than the one we have quoted. If the problem of life in China were narrowed down to the issue, whether to eat to live, or to live to eat, the choice of a Chinese would not be long in doubt. In fact it would not be in doubt at all. It is true that there is a very ancient classical dictum which avers that the Superior Man does not have his thoughts on food, but on doctrine. But it must be remembered that this saying was uttered a long time ago, and that it predicates nothing about any except Superior Men, a race of beings, who, if they ever existed in China, are now, like the megatherium, the deinosauros and the pterodactyl, known only in the plaster casts of museums, or rather by a vague tradition, unaccompanied by even a stray bone, as a voucher. The ordinary Chinese of to-day does not meditate on doctrine, but he does meditate on food. If one hears a snatch of a Chinese conversation anywhere, and begins to unravel a stray thread, the result will be to show that the subject is either food, or else it is money considered generally in relation to its capacity as a provider of food. The procurement of food in China is a serious matter; in fact it is the one serious matter of life, in presence of which all other matters fade into comparative insignificance. When one considers what a vast multitude of human

beings are to be provided for, it does not seem so strange that there are millions in China at any particular time, who do not know what it is to have a full meal, and who are actually in a condition of chronic starvation. In view of the gaunt possibilities of the future, it is not to be wondered at if the business of eating assumes a prominence, to which in the lands from which we come, we are strangers.

In the matter of eating, we have no hesitation in declaring Chinese civilisation to be far in advance of ours. The Chinese recognize the element of time in the consumption of food, as we do not. Work, they wisely say, may be hastened, but not food. Although they are by no means considerate of foreigners in this particular, yet among themselves, the announcement that any one is eating, is considered a valid excuse for his delaying almost anything to almost any extent. The Chinese seem to understand by instinct, that this is as satisfactory an apology as that of the famous French lady, who begged to be excused to a caller as she was "engaged in dying!" Whatever may be the abstract merits of a vegetarian diet, it cannot be said that the diet of the Chinese is to be admired in any respect, if we take that of the common and lower classes as a sample. But despite its coarseness, and its frequent lack of the requisite nutritive quality, it is eaten in a way, which is a silent admonition to the restless and over anxious foreigner, who is in too much haste, and who has his mind too full of a multitude of other subjects, to get the benefit of his food. If the quality of ordinary Chinese food is not up to a high standard, ample amends is made by the consumption of such a quantity as would seem incredible if we were not daily witnesses of the fact. In Western lands, an invitation to a meal, is very likely to be regarded as a "bore," and this quite irrespective of the merits of the food, of which we are by no means sure to take any account. But a long experience of Chinese ways might not enable one to recall a single case where the acceptance of an invitation to eat was given with anything like reluctance. On the contrary, the art of securing such invitations is in China a "fine art," and he who can always and everywhere put it into execution, is looked upon as a much more desirable model than the legendary "Superior Man," whose thoughts are on too high a plane for food. It is impossible not to admire, and

perhaps in a general way to envy the genuine gusto with which a party of Chinese sit down to a feast. They have enjoyed it in anticipation, as children enjoy Christmas, they enjoy it in its progress, however long (and to an Occidental wearisome) it may be, and they enjoy it in retrospect, until the memory of it is dimmed by another similar occasion. Hope has been defined as "a sentiment exhibited in the wag of a dog's tail while he is waiting for a bone." In our opinion, it is also finely manifested in that solemn moment when all the Chinese guests are gathered about the "eight fairy table," with their chopsticks aloft, in simultaneous pause, while the host calls out in notes of keenest joy, "Come, come, come," upon which their bliss begins. There is, or ought to be, no doubt that the organs of digestion were intended to give pleasure in their exercise, and if this is the case, we repeat that the Chinese are here far nearer to the ideal of life than are we.

If the Chinese know how to eat, they also know how to prepare their food. We do not of course mean, kind reader, that you are fond of Chinese cookery. Neither are we. At the same time we cannot be blind to the fact, that regarded as the utilisation of the means at their disposal, the Chinese are in advance of most Western peoples. The details given in the Confucian Analects show that "The Master," albeit he was a "Superior Man," was by no means above good cookery. He would not eat what was not in a fit state to eat, and this of itself would tend to show that had Confucius survived to the present time, and taken a trip to certain lands that we could name (but will not), he would have been hard put to it. The Chinese know enough to bring their food on the table in the condition in which it is to be used. We do not. A Chinese official who had been honoured with an invitation to a dinner at the British Consulate, narrated afterwards, how the English "Great Man" stood up at the head of the table, and with a gigantic sword cut into the huge mass of beef, that was placed before him. Ranks of servants stood all about, and, like the visitor, watched the proceeding, and all of them were too used to it, to appreciate the exquisite absurdity of the performance. Is there any good reason why a host should pass a practical examination in the presence of his guests, as to his knowledge of comparative anatomy? Is it a

sublime duty of the civilization of the nineteenth century to wait, while a man does at an inconvenient time what his servants could have done better at a convenient time? Think of the acute tortures that have been—yea, and that are daily suffered by those who are cordially invited to take the seat of honour, and dissect a dead goose, not infrequently, as we know, with the result of depositing it in the lap of the lady sitting next, who of course smiles, and says it is of no consequence! Nothing of this sort ever takes place in China, and for this reason alone, we are prepared to maintain that in eating, in cooking, and in carving, the Chinese are more civilized than we.

CHAPTER VII.

ECONOMY.

THE word Economy signifies the rule by which the house should be ordered, especially with reference to the relation between expenditure and income. Economy, as we understand the term, may be displayed in three several ways, by limiting the number of wants, by preventing waste, and by the adjustment of forces in such a manner as to make a little represent a great deal. In each of these ways, the Chinese are, pre-eminently, economical. One of the first things which impresses the traveller in China is the extremely simple diet of the people. The vast bulk of the population seems to depend upon a few articles, such as rice, beans in various preparations, millet, garden vegetables, and fish. These, and a few other things, form the staple of countless millions, ornamented it may be on the feast days, or other special occasions, with a bit of meat. Now that so much attention is given in Western lands to the contrivance of ways in which to furnish nourishing food to the very poor, at a minimum cost, it is not without interest to learn the undoubted fact, that in China, in ordinary years, it is quite possible to furnish wholesome food in abundant quantity at a cost for each adult of not more than two cents a day. Even in famine times, thousands of persons have been kept alive for months, on an allowance of not more than a cent and a half a day. This implies the general existence in China of that high degree of skill in the preparation of food, to which we have already referred. Poor and coarse as their food often is, insipid and even repulsive as it not infrequently seems to the foreigner, it is impossible not to recognize the fact, that in the cooking and serving of what they have, the Chinese are past masters of the culinary art. In this particular, Mr. Wingrove Cooke ranked them below the French, and above the English

(and he might have added the Americans.) Whether they are really below any one of these nationalities, we are by no means so certain as Mr. Cooke may have been, but their superiority to some of them, is beyond dispute. In the few simple articles which we have mentioned, it is evident that even from the point of view of the scientific physiologist, the Chinese have made a wise choice of their staple foods. The thoroughness of their mode of preparing food, and the great variety in which these few constituents are constantly presented, are known to all who have paid the least attention to Chinese cookery. Another fact of extreme significance does not force itself upon our notice, but can easily be verified. There is very little waste in the preparation of Chinese food, and everything is made to do so much duty as possible. What there is left, after an ordinary Chinese family have finished one of their meals, would represent but a minute fraction of the net cost of the food. In illustration of this general fact, it is only necessary to glance at the physical condition of the Chinese dog or cat. It is the unhappy function of these animals to "live" on the leavings of human beings, and their lives are uniformly protracted at "a poor dying rate." The populations of new countries are proverbially wasteful, and we have not the least doubt that it would be possible to support sixty millions of Asiatics in comparative luxury, with the materials daily wasted in a land like the United States, where a living is easily to be had. But we should like to see how many human beings could be fattened from what there is left after as many Chinese have "eaten to repletion," and the servants or children have all had their turn at the remains! It is a fact which cannot fail to force itself upon our notice at every turn, that the people of this land are not gifted, as a race, with that extreme fastidiousness in regard to food, which is frequently developed in Western lands. All is fish that comes to their net, and there is very little which does not come there first or last. In the northern parts of China, the horse, the mule, the ox, and the donkey are in universal use, and in large districts the camel is made to do full duty. Doubtless it will appear to some of our readers that economy is carried too far, when we mention that it is the general practice to eat *all* of these animals, as soon as they expire, no matter whether the cause of death be an accident, old age, or disease. This is done as a matter of course, and occasions no

remark whatever, nor is the habit given up because the animal may chance to have died of some epidemic malady, such as the pleuro-pnuemonia in cattle. Such meat is not considered so healthful as that of animals which have died of other diseases, and this truth is recognized in the lower scale of prices asked for it, but it is all sold, and is all eaten. Certain disturbances of the human organizations into which such diseased meat have entered, are well recognized by the people, but it is doubtless considered more economical to eat the meat, at the reduced rates, and run the risk of the consequences, which, it should be said, are by no means constant. Dead dogs and cats are subject to the same processes of absorption as dead horses, mules, and donkeys. We have been personally cognizant of two cases in which villagers cooked and ate dogs which had been purposely poisoned by strychnine, to get rid of them. On one of these occasions, some one was thoughtful enough to consult a foreigner as to the probable results, but as the animal was "already in the pot," the survivors could not make up their minds to forego the luxury of a feast, and no harm appeared to come of their indulgence !

Another example of Chinese economy in relation to the preparation of food, is found in the nice adjustment of the material of the cooking kettles, to the exigencies of the requisite fuel. The latter is scarce and dear, and consists generally of nothing but the stalks and roots of the crops, making a rapid blaze which quickly disappears. To meet the needs of the case, the bottoms of the boilers are made as thin as possible, and require very careful handling. The whole business of gathering this indispensable fuel is an additional example of economy in an extreme form. Every smallest child, who can do nothing else, can at least gather fuel. The vast army of fuel gatherers which in the autumn and winter overspread all the land, leave not a weed behind the hungry teeth of their bamboo rakes. Boys are sent into the trees to beat off the autumnal leaves with clubs, as if they were chestnuts, and even straws are scarcely allowed leisure to show which way the wind blows, before some enterprising collector has "annexed" them. On one of the principal highways of the Empire, we once saw a Chinese woman a little in advance of our cart, apparently picking up something in the road, and afterwards throwing out her arms in a wild forbidding manner, like an actor when she cries

"False wizard, Avaunt!" On approaching nearer, it became evident what the woman was about. Chancing to see a pile of manure in the road (which probably adjoined land belonging to her family) she had gathered it up in her hands, and scattered it over the adjacent soil in such a way, as to have it do the most good, and at the same time foil the enterprise of the professional manure collectors, who everywhere swarm. It was the impressible instinct of economy which led the woman to do this, and every thrifty Chinese housewife is in her own way, equally economical. She knows how to make the most of her materials. Her dress is not in its pattern, or its construction wasteful like those of her sisters in Occidental countries, but all is planned to save time, strength and material. The tiniest scrap of foreign stuff is always welcome to a Chinese woman, who will make it reappear in forms of utility if not of beauty, of which a whole parliament of authoresses of "Domestic Economies" would never have dreamed. What cannot be employed in one place, is sure to be just the thing for another, and the least trifle of stuff is sufficient for the binding of a shoe. The benevolent person in London or New York who gives away the clothing for which he has no further use, entertains a wild hope that it may not be the means of making the recipients paupers, and so do more harm than good. But whoever gives away similar articles in China, though the stuffs there in use, and the style of wear are so radically different from ours, has a well grounded confidence that the usefulness of that particular article has now as last begun, and will not be exhausted, till there is nothing left of it for a base with which other materials can unite.

The Chinese often present their friends with complimentary inscriptions written on paper loosely *basted* upon a silk background. Basting is adopted instead of pasting, in order that the recipient may, if he chooses, eventually remove the inscription, when he will have a very serviceable piece of silk!

Many of the fruits of Chinese economy are not at all pleasing to the Westerners, but we cannot help admitting the genuine nature of the claim which may be built on them. In parts of the Empire, especially (strange to say) in the north, the children of both sexes roam around in the costume of the Garden of Eden, for many months of the year. This comes to be considered more

comfortable for them, but the primary motive is economy. The stridulous squeak of the vast army of Chinese wheelbarrows is due to the absence of the few drops of oil which might stop it, but which never do stop it, because to those who are gifted with "an absence of nerves" the squeak is cheaper than the oil. The same may be observed in reference to those personal habits which form so great a contrast in the Chinese and Japanese peoples. If a Japanese emigrates, it is specified in his contract, that he is to be furnished daily with so many gallons of hot water, in which he may, according to custom, parboil himself. The Chinese have their bathing houses too, but the greater part of the Chinese people never go near them, nor indeed ever saw one. "Do you wash your child every day?" said an inquisitive foreign lady to a Chinese mother, who was seen throwing shovels full of dust over her progeny, and then wiping it off with an old broom. "Wash him every day," was the indignant response, "he was never washed since he was born!" To the Chinese generally, the motto could never be made even intelligible which was put in his window by a dealer in soap, "Cheaper than dirt."

A Consul invited a certain Taot'ai to dinner, at which the wife of the Consul was present. When the party was seated, the lady happened to observe that a soiled napkin had been placed before her guest and apologized. "Oh," said he, rolling up his sleeve, and displaying an unspeakable under-garment, "*it is a great deal cleaner than my shirt!*"

The Chinese doubtless regard the average foreigner, as it is said the Italians do the English, whom they term "soap-wasters." Washing of clothes in China, by and for the Chinese there certainly is, but it is on a very subdued scale, and in comparison with what we call cleanliness, it might almost be left out of account. Economy of material has much to do with this, as we cannot help thinking, for many Chinese appreciate clean things as much as we do, and some of them are models of neatness, albeit under heavy disadvantages.

It is due to the instinct of economy that it is generally impossible to buy any tool ready made. You get the parts in a "raw" shape, and adjust the handles, etc., yourselves. It is generally cheaper to do this for oneself, than to have it done, and as everyone takes this view of it, nothing is to be had ready-made.

The same principle is illustrated in buying house doors, which are sold at the larger fairs. These doors are incomplete, and in fact quite useless without a bar by which to fasten them. Yet in some districts at least, the prevailing practice is to sell the doors without such bars, and the purchaser must put them in for himself. At the bottom of the doors is a movable sill which is used as a bench. In a bad year, many houses are pulled down that the timbers and wood-work may be sold. In such cases we have found that second-hand doors do not have the movable sill, which was left at home, and in the place of which a new one must be made at some expense. Did they sell the sill to some one else? we ask. "No, it was of no use, and was thrown aside."

We have spoken of economical adjustments of material, such as that found in ordinary houses, where a dim light which must cost next to nothing, is made to diffuse its darkness over two apartments by being placed in a hole in the dividing wall. The best examples of such adjustments are to be found in Chinese manufactures, such as the weaving of all kinds of fabrics, working in pottery, metal, ivory, etc. Industries of this sort do not seem to us to exemplify ingenuity, so much as they illustrate Chinese economy. Many better ways can be devised of doing Chinese work, than the ways which they adopt, but none which make insignificant materials go further than they do with the Chinese. They seem to be able to do almost everything by means of almost nothing, and this is a characteristic generally of their productions, whether simple or complex. It applies as well to their iron-foundries, on a minute scale of completeness in a small yard, as to a cooking range of strong and perfect draft, made in an hour out of a pile of mud bricks, lasting indefinitely, operating perfectly and costing nothing.

No better and more characteristic exemple of economy of materials in accomplishing great tasks, could be found even in China, than the arrangements, or rather the entire lack of arrangements for the handling of the enormous amount of grain which is sent as tribute to Peking. This comes up the Peiho from Tientsin, and is discharged at T'ung-chou. It would surprise a "Corn Exchange" merchant to find that all the machinery needed for unloading, measuring and removing this mountain of rice and millet, is simple an army of coolies, a supply of boxes

made like a truncated cone, which are the "bushel" measures, and an indefinite number of reed mats. Only this and nothing more. The mats are spread on the ground, the grain is emptied, remeasured, sacked and sent off, and the mats being taken up, the Emperor's Corn Exchange is once more a mere mud-bank! On an American tobacco plantation, one of the heaviest expenses is the building of the long and carefully constructed sheds for drying. In Chinese tobacco farms there is for this object no expense at all. The sheds are made of thatch, and when they are worn out, the material is just as good for fuel as new stalks. When the tobacco is picked, the stout stiff stalks are left standing. Straw ropes are stretched along these stalks, and upon the ropes are hung the tobacco leaves, which are taken in at night with the ropes attached, like clothes hung to a line. For simplicity and effectiveness this devise could hardly be excelled.

Every observant resident in China will be able to add to these random illustrations of a Chinese social fact, but perhaps no more characteristic instance could be cited than the case of an old Chinese woman, who was found hobbling along, in a painfully slow way, and on enquiry of whom it was ascertained, that she was on the way to the home of a relative, so as to die in a place convenient to the family grave-yard, and thus avoid the expense of coffin-bearers for so long a distance!

CHAPTER VIII.

HUNGER FOR GAIN AND THIRST FOR FAME.

THE Chinese have not distinguished themselves as psychologists, but they have struck out one popular theory which though varying widely from Western ideas is in China almost assumed as an axiom of thought. In place of the tangled web of motives, which we recognize as mainsprings of human action, the Chinese have but two—the pursuit of gain and the quest of fame. These are the two eyes with which a Chinese contemplates life, and when each of them is adjusted to its focus, the survey of all human activity is supposed to be complete. With the possible exception of the descendants of Abraham, the Chinese seem to be possessed of stronger commercial instincts than any other race extant. They have an amazing faculty for gain, even the most trifling, such as is represented by scraping the rust from a needle. In their own allegorical language a man who is intent on securing any advantage, however minute, is represented as thrown into the kettle of boiling oil in which the Chinese Rhadamanthus plunges his victims, and struggling to gain the outer edge, because there it is a trifle less hot than in the middle! The Chinese are by no means the only people, in whom the instinct of the pursuit of gain is highly developed, but with them it is carried to a higher pitch, more uniformily exercised, and operates as a more potent force than with most other races. Of this everyone with the smallest knowledge of China life, become convincingly aware. But the hunger for gain, so all-prevalent in China, is modified by another force equally powerful yet much less conspicuous, a thirst for notoriety. If we consider even superficially the conditions of Chinese life, it becomes apparent that the avenues to what we consider "fame" are not very available to the sons of Han. It is not easy for a Chinese to invent anything new, much less to get

it into use. And if he did so, the only consequence would be that the invention would be patronized, and the inventor unknown. The paths of science are all closed to the unscientific Chinese, but even were they all open, in a country with no patent-law, and no periodical literature, they could not lead to fame. Nor does literature offer a better field. There are already far more books than the reading public can either afford to purchase, or can assimilate, and in any country the number of book-makers must be insignificant. A Chinese has no avenue of renown as a traveller —he could not seriously contemplate an excursion to the equatorial or to the polar region—nor if he did, would the result be fame. He cannot hope to get himself elected to anything, for there are no elections. In short he is shut up to the single avenue of acquiring a degree, civil or military, by competitive examinations, and in this enterprise his chances of success would seem to be about two out of one hundred. He who succeeds in this, even in the lowest degree of "Flourishing Talent," is praised and honoured, the envy of hundreds of unsuccessful competitors, and of thousands who could not even compete. But it is evident that such a tiny outlet is entirely inadequate to the exigencies of a passion so powerful and so all pervading as the Chinese thirst for notoriety. Successful scholarship aside (and often included), the only avenue to fame in China is the expenditure of money, and it is for this reason that we consider the longing for fame as a kind of antipodal or complementary force, even modifying the love of gain which accumulates what the love of fame expends. The *Peking Gazette* bristles with memorials suggesting the bestowal of Imperial honours on men and women for a great variety of merits —some of them of a highly negative character, such as *not* having married, or having survived to a great age. The external aspect of all this is extremely poetical and patriarchal, but the practical aspect of it is simply a matter of money. Somebody has to be "got at" to get the memorial presented, and in important cases, there are what machinists term *bearings*—very practical bearings too—which must be oiled to insure success, and perhaps oiled liberally and repeatedly till there is no friction. The simple-minded traveller sees a costly and elaborately carved stone "portal" to some maiden, widow, or scholar, and learns that it was erected by "Imperial Command." This leads him to suppose

that the Emperor paid the bills of the stone-cutter (or made some one else do so), and presented the structure to the object of his favour, as Kaiser Wilhelm bestows a gold cross. The Emperor, on the contrary, did nothing of the kind. What he did do, however, was to *authorize* the favoured subject, or "his heirs, administrators or assigns" to do the work at their own expense, to inscribe the priceless characters which announce that the Emperor "ordered" it. That an intensely practical people like the Chinese, whose profits are accumulated in such driblets that it seems—like "eating soup with a fork" impossible to get enough, should be willing to sacrifice anything for such "fame" as a portal, or a tablet confers, is an illustration of their thirst for celebrity. But such tokens of Imperial favour are scarce. The great multitude must be content with such local notoriety as can be had by titular honours granted for subscriptions for public works, or failing this, with elegant weddings, expensive funerals and great feasts. There are scarcely any limits assignable to such expenditures, and it is not uncommon to find persons who have actually reduced themselves to property in order to "buy a name." And provided the end is secured, money so invested is regarded as expended wisely and well.

It has been wisely said that the true way to elevate a people is to teach them new wants; what the Chinese vitally need is a wider outlook, and a comprehension that the real "gain" of one is the gain of all. They need to think of themselves as literally a "body politic" for then only can it be infused with a "public spirit!" And especially do they need to act on one of the wisest of their adages: "Do what you ought to do, and look not to remote results."

CHAPTER IX.

INDUSTRY.

INDUSTRY is defined as habitual diligence in any employment—steady attention to business. In this age of the world, industry is one of the most highly prized among the virtues, and it is one which invariably commands respect. When Mr. Burlingame, in the capacity of Envoy of China to the chief foreign nations of the West, made the speech in New York, which attracted so much attention to his singular mission, he said to the merchants who gave him a banquet, speaking of the Chinese, "I say it is a great people; it is a polite people; it is a patient people; it is a sober people; it is an industrious people." In the last predicate, at least, Mr. Burlingame was unquestionably accurate; the Chinese are pre-eminently an industrious people.

The industry of a people, speaking roughly, may be said to unite the three dimensions of length, breadth and thickness; or, to use a different expression, it may be said to have two qualities of extension, and one of intension. By the quality of length, we mean the amount of time during which the industry is exercised. By the quality of breadth, we mean the number of persons to whom the predicate of industrious may be fairly applied. By intension, we mean the amount of energy which is displayed in the "habitual diligence," and in "steady attention to business." The aggregate result will be the product of these three factors. It is by no means always the case, that the impressions of the casual traveller, and those of the old residents are the same, but there can be little doubt, that casual travellers, and residents of the longest standing, will agree in a profound conviction of the diligence of the Chinese people. The very first glance which a new-comer gets of the Chinese, induces him to think that this people is carrying out in social affairs, the maxim which John

Wesley named as the rule for a successful church; "all at it, and always at it." Idleness in China is not conspicuous. Every one *seems* to be doing something. There are of course, plenty of wealthy persons, albeit a mere microscopic fraction of the whole community, who can abundantly live without doing any work, but their life is not ordinarily of a kind which is externally visible to the foreigner. Wealthy people in China do not commonly retire from business, but devote themselves to it with the same kind and degree of attention, as when they were poor.

The Chinese classify themselves as Scholars, Farmers, Workmen, and Merchants. Let us glance at each of these sub-divisions of society, and see what they have to say for the industry of the people. It is exceedingly difficult for Occidentals to enter sympathetically into such a scheme of education as that of the Chinese. Its gross defects are not likely to be overlooked, but one feature of it is adapted to thrust itself on the attention, at all times—it has no real rewards, except for diligence. The many back doors which are always open to those who have the money to purchase degrees, would seem well calculated to dampen the ardour of any student, but such is not the main effect of the sale of office. The complaint is made in all the provinces, that there are far more eligible candidates for every position, than there are positions to be filled. All the examination halls, from the lowest to the highest, seem to be perpetually crowded, and the number of those who compete in any single prefecture often rises to above ten thousand. When we consider the amount of mental toil which the mere entrance to any one of these examinations involves, we get a vivid conception of the intellectual industry of the Chinese. The traditional diligence of the standard heroes mentioned in the trimetrical classic, who studied by the light of a glow-worm, or who tied their books to the horns of the ox with which they were ploughing, is imitated at the present day, with various degrees of approximation, by thousands in all parts of China. In many cases this industry begins to disappear with the initial success of the first degree, but the Chinese do not consider such a one a scholar at all, but reserve this title of honour for those who keep on in the narrow and thorny path, until at length their perseverance is crowned with success. In what land but China, would it be possible to find examples of a grandfather, son and grandson,

all competing in the same examination for the same degree, to be rewarded at last by seeing age and indomitable perseverance rewarded at the age of eighty years, by the long coveted honour?

In the spring of 1889, various memorials appeared in the *Peking Gazette*, relating the aged candidates at the provincial examinations. The Governor-General reported that at the autumnal examination in Foochow, nine candidates over eighty years of age, and two over ninety went through the prescribed tests, and sent in essays of which the composition was good and the hand-writing firm and distinct. Aged candidates, he says, *who have passed through an interval of sixty years from attaining their bachelor's degree, who have attended the three last examinations for the higher*, are if unsuccessful the fourth time, entitled to honorary degree. The Governor of Honan in like manner reported thirteen candidates over eighty years of age, and one over nighty, who all "went through the whole nine days' ordeal, and wrote essays which were perfectly accurate in diction and showed no signs of failing years." But even this astonishing record was surpassed in the province of Anhui, where thirty-five of the competitors were over eighty years of age, *and eighteen over ninety!* Could any other country afford a spectacle like this?

If the life of the scholar in China is one of unremitting diligence, that of the farmer is not less so. The work of a farmer, like that of a housekeeper, is never done. With the exception of a comparatively brief period in the middle of the winter, throughout the northern provinces, there never appears to be a time when there is not only something to do, but a great deal of it. Doubtless this is more or less true of farming everywhere, but the Chinese farmer is industrious with an industry which it would be difficult to surpass. One is often reminded of the despairing incredulity of a plantation negro, to whom some one had been describing heaven as a place of rest—even for the blacks. To this, he made the not unnatural reply, "You can't make dis nigger believe dat, ef dey can't find nuffin else fer de pore niggers to do, dey'll *jest make'em shub de clouds along!*" In the horizon of the Chinese agriculturist, there are always clouds, more or less dense, and not one of them does not need vigorous shoving.

That which is true of the farmer class, is true with still greater emphasis of the mere labourer, who is driven by the constant and chronic re-appearance of the wolf at his door, to spend his life in an everlasting grind. As the farmer bestows the most painstaking thought and care upon every separate stalk of cabbage, picking off carefully each minute insect, thus at last tiring out the ceaseless swarms by his own greater perseverance, so does the labourer watch for the most insignificant opportunity for a job, that he may have something for his stomach and for his back, and for other stomachs and backs that are wholly dependant upon him. Those who have occasion to travel where cart-roads exist, will often be obliged to rise soon after midnight, and pursue their journey, for such, they are told, is the custom. But no matter at what hour he is on the way, there are small bodies of peasants patrolling the roads, with fork in hand and basket on their back, watching for opportunities to collect a little manure. When there is no other work pressing, this is an invariable and an inexhaustible resource.

It is by no means uncommon to see those who are hard pressed to find the means of support, following two different lines of occupation, which dovetail into each other. Thus the boatmen of Tientsin, whose business is spoiled by the closing of the rivers, take to the swift ice-sled, by which means it is possible to be transported rapidly, at a minimum cost. In the same way, most of the rural population of some districts spend all the time which can be spared from the exigencies of farm work, in making hats or in plaiting the braid, now so large an article of export. Chinese women are not often seen without a shoe-sole in their hand on which they are perpetually taking stitches, even while talking gossip at the entrance of their alleys, or perhaps it is a reel of cotton which they are spinning. But idle they are not.

The indefatigable activity of the classes which have been named, is well matched by that of the merchants, and their *employés*. The life of a merchant's clerk, even in the Western lands, is not that of one who holds a sinecure, but as compared with that of a Chinese clerk, it is comparative idleness. For to the work of the latter, there is no end. His holidays are few, and his tasks heavy, though they may be interspersed with periods of comparative torpor.

The quality of extension, of which we have spoken, applies to the number of those who are industrious, but it also applies to the extent of time covered by that industry, which as we have seen is very great. But emphasis must be laid upon another feature of Chinese industry not yet mentioned, the early and late hours which it keeps. The Chinese day begins at a dim period, often not at a great remove from midnight. The Emperor holds his daily audiences at an hour when every Court of Europe is wrapped in the embrace of Morpheus. To an Occidental this seems simply inexplicable, but to a Chinese it doubtless appears the most natural thing in the world. And the conduct of the Son of Heaven is imitated more or less closely by the subjects of the Son of Heaven, in all parts of his Empire. Whether it be the copper workers of Canton, the tinfoil workers of Foochow, the wood-carvers of Ningpo, the rice-mill workers of Shanghai, the cotton-cleaners and workers in the treadmill for bolting flour in the northern provinces, they may all be heard late at night, and at a preposterous hour in the morning. Long before daylight, the traveller comes upon a countryman who has already reached a distance of many miles from his home, where he is posted in the darkness, waiting for the coming of daylight, when he will begin the sale of his cabbages! By the time an Occidental has had his breakfast a Chinese market is nearly over. There are few more significant contrasts than are suggested by a stroll along the bund in Shanghai, at the hour of half-past five, on a summer's morning. The lordly European, who built those palaces which line the water-front, and who does his business therein, is conspicuous by his total absence, but the Asiatic is on hand in full force, and has been on hand for a long time. It will be hours before the Occidentals begin to jostle the Chinese from the sidewalks, and to enter with luxurious ease on their round of work, and by that time the native will have finished half his day's labour.

Sir John Davis was quite right in his comments on *the cheerful labour* of the Chinese, as a sign that their government has succeeded in securing them great content with their condition. This quality of their labour is one of its most striking characteristics, and to be comprehended must be long observed and well weighed.

One cannot help forecasting a time, when the white and the yellow races will come into a keener competition than any yet known. Which of them, when that inevitable day shall have arrived, will have to go to the wall?

It remains to say a word of the quality of *intension* in Chinese industry. The Chinese are Asiatics, and they work as such. It is in vain to attempt to make over this virile race on the model of our own. To us they certainly appear lacking in the heartiness, which we esteem so highly. The Anglo-Saxon needs no Scriptural hint to enable him to see the importance of doing with his might what his hand finds to do, but the Chinese cannot be made to change his pace, though the combined religions and philosophy of the ages were brought to bear upon him. He has profited by the accumulated experience of millenniums, and like the gods of Homer, he is never in a hurry.

Surely if Solomon was right in his economic maxim that the hand of the diligent maketh rich, the Chinese ought to be among the most prosperous of the peoples of the earth. And so they would doubtless be, if there were with them a balance of virtues, instead of, as we see, a conspicuous absence of some of those fundamental qualities, which, however they may be enumerated as "constant virtues" are chiefly "constant" in their absence. When, by whatever means, these qualities of honesty, and sincerity, shall have been restored to their theoretical place in the Chinese moral consciousness, then (and not sooner) will the Chinese reap the full reward of their unmatched Industry.

CHAPTER X.

CREDULITY.

CREDULITY is defined as the readiness to believe without sufficient evidence. The Chinese, as a rule, seem to be singularly insensible to the relative value of evidence, and to be very little aware of the need of it. The result is naturally to make them easy victims of deception, in regard to matters of which we should suppose the means of judging to be within the reach of everyone. According to Archbishop Whateley, the way to avoid credulity, or incredulity—for they are correlates—is to listen to and yield to the best evidence, and to believe and disbelieve, on good grounds. This is exactly what the Chinese do not, and what they can by no possibility do, as long as they have no instinct of weighing evidence, and no adequate criteria for determining what are, and what are not good grounds. In the presence of the bewildering results of Western science, the Chinese are and feel themselves to be at sea. They behold forces at work, of the nature of which they are totally ignorant, and they see no reason to question any alleged result. Examples of this trait, will occur to everyone. A few years ago, one of the Legations in Peking had a cart, which was fitted with strong springs, designed to ease the dreadful jolts to which travel in the Capital is always subject. One of those Chinese who had the best opportunities to know the nature of the innovation, was heard to explain that this was a contrivance by which the vehicle could be propelled without the aid of the mule, which he supposed to be simply an ornament, a mere tribute to custom. The Chinese have always been alive to the advantages of foreign travel, though they can scarcely be said to be a nation of travellers; and they readily accept the results, real or supposed, of those whose observations have been more extensive than their own. This

often leads them into errors, but errors which they share with all mankind. But if there is one point on which the verdict of Western nations is united, it is the belief in the uniformity of nature, however the fact of this uniformity may be explained. On this important topic, however, the Chinese intellect is by no means clear; in fact it is sometimes highly befogged. It is by no means uncommon to meet with scholars whose talent, gauged by competitive examination, has been adjudged to be "flourishing," inquire in all sincerity, if in your honorable country there is also a sun and a moon. We have seen a popular audience gathered by the roadside to gaze at the foreigners, entirely satisfied with the information that in Western lands, the plants are the same as in China, *except* that they have the peculiarity of always growing with the roots in the air, and the fruits in the soil. The announcement attracted no more interest than statistics as to the depth of the sea, or the distance of Venus. When the British troops occupied North-China, the Chinese soldiers for the first time saw foreign ladies mounted on the backs of ponies. The singular appearance, gave rise to the tale—doubtless implicitly believed to this day—that there is a variety of Occidental women, with but one leg!

A country woman expressed the opinion that the remarkable whiteness of foreign children is due to the practice of their mothers of *licking* them every day, as cats do their kittens! Foreign newspapers, containing cartoons intended to be humorous, are very ill-adapted to circulation in China. An intelligent Mohammedan inquired of a foreign physician in China, as to the habitat of the people with wings, who live in trees. On investigation, it turned out that his ideas were based upon pictures which he had seen on a match-box!

In the days of Sir Frederick Bruce, there was a fine large dog in the British Legation in Peking, in regard to the age of which the curiosity of the Chinese was excited. They were informed, by way of banter, that he was—like the most esteemed Chinese pottery—"Ta Ming," that is, the product of the Ming dynasty. This intelligence was received in a way to leave no doubt that it was credited, and was doubtless set down in the same category with many other extraordinary and somewhat surprising things of which the natives were daily obliged to take cognizance.

The Chinese have an abiding faith in the existence of regions unvisited by man, a faith analogous to that of children with regard to "fairy land." Foreigners are often asked whether there are not countries in which there are *only women*, others in which the heads of the inhabitants are like those of dogs. In one instance, this belief was confirmed in a Chinese woman, who happened to see a foreign illustrated paper, containing political cartoons representing certain individuals as dogs. "Oh, to be sure," she remarked, "they live in the dog-head kingdom." A servant who opened a kit of split mackerel was surprised to find that they had but one eye, etc. An older servant assured him that this was an "old time custom" of some foreign fish! Another singular notion of the Chinese, based upon a much quoted book, is a belief that there is a land in which the inhabitants have holes entirely through their stomachs. We have heard of a most unsympathetic foreigner, who being appealed to on this point, by a Chinese, immediately decided that there certainly is such a kingdom. "And where is it?" he was asked. "In China," was the answer. The Chinese who had proposed the question insisted that this could not be, as he had never heard of such a thing. "Take off your coat," was the reply, and "I will show you." The man did as requested, whereupon the foreigner fixed his eyes attentively upon the centre of the man's abdominal region, seemed much disappointed, observed sadly, *Ah! I see you have sewed it up!*

The credulity of the Chinese is the stock in trade of the vast army of vendors of all varieties of medicines, each warranted to cure every ill to which the human body is subject. It is also the principal reliance of the innumerable Buddhist and Taoist priests, whose very existence depends upon working this mine to the utmost practicable extent. With what fatal success their efforts have been crowned, is too obvious to the most superficial observer.

There is a variety of credulity in Western lands, due not to the lack of scientific facts, but to the excess of them. A generation that has witnessed the evolution of steam, and the dawn of the reign of the still mightier electricity, is prepared to believe almost anything. The celebrated canard known as the "Moon-hoax," is an instance of this sort, illustrations of which might be

indefinitely extended. While we smile at the gullibility of our uneducated friends among the Chinese, we shall do well to consider whether, we are, after all, so greatly their superiors in the art of accurate discrimination in the regions of the vague and little known.

It is obvious at a glance, how important a factor the credulity of the Chinese is and may always become, in their intercourse with foreign nations. The most irrational notions are widely held in regard to our capacity for evil, or for good. It does not seem at all improbable that two men who are surveying the bank of the Yellow River, may be masters of Feng-shui, who have got themselves into the favour of the unsuspecting officials, and are intending to metamorphose a whole prefecture into a pellet, and make off with it, to their remote land. The singular persistance of the belief in the use of human eyes, as an ingredient in the manufacture of silver, is an example of the survival of the least fit. Beliefs of this type are not the product of reasoning, and they are not to be dispelled by ratiocination. An attack by reasoning on such a foe is as inert as the discharge of a park of artillery into a Scotch mist. The projectiles are irresistible, and make their way through the yielding mass, with infinite ease. But the mist is in the same place, and of the same density as before. But though a mist cannot be disturbed by the discharge of artillery, nor yet by the waving of a million brooms, by a strong steady breeze it may be utterly dispersed. The new force from without, which China needs to scatter the mists of ages, will be found only in the breezes of a Christian civilization.

CHAPTER XI.

PEACEABLENESS.

THE first impression which the traveller receives on visiting the Chinese Empire is that of magnitude. China seems vast, too vast in fact. The same is true of the Asiatic continent. It has been criticized as being in all respects on too large a scale. Its plateaux are too broad, its mountains too high, its rivers too full, its populations too enormous, its famines too devastating. Professor De Morgan has affirmed that the German language has seven deadly sins—"too many volumes in the language, too many sentences in a volume, too many words in a sentence, too many syllables in a word, too many letters in a syllable, too many strokes in a letter, too much black in a stroke." In like manner, it may be predicated of the Chinese Empire, that it contains too many countries, its countries have too many provinces, its provinces too many prefectures, its prefectures too many districts, its districts too many villages, its villages too many families, and its families too many persons. Its millions teem. Wherever there is a sufficient expanse of water they overflow, and become amphibious not to say aquatic. Wherever there are mountains these millions burrow their way into defiles and recesses, like a worm in an apple. There is one aspect of this density of population, to which we are so accustomed that it fails to impress us, as it might. It is the comparative peaceableness of the Chinese race. Perhaps we should not say "comparative peaceableness," but superlative peaceableness. By what force are these vast masses of human beings kept from flying at each other's throats, and indulging in the luxury of mutual extermination? We believe Mr. Meadows was right in saying that it is due to the prevalence of moral forces which have in Chinese civilization replaced physical forces. We do not forget the terrible clan-fights for which the province of

Kuangtung is especially noted, and in which pitched battles occur, causing the loss of hundreds of lives. In the presence of these social typhoons, the ordinary machinery of law is useless. The mandarin is fully aware of this, and does not think of getting between the sharp blades of the social scissors, but judiciously waiting until they are once more parallel, appears on the scene waving the banner of peace and order. What do these occurrences prove? That while the Cantonese and perhaps the Fukien men, are clannish and belligerent, the Chinese as a whole, are not so. They are peaceable. The Chinese fight crickets and cocks, but do they have dog-fights and bull-fights? Have any of our readers ever seen two Chinese on the verge of a quarrel, and the bystanders urging them on with exclamations of savage delight: "Hit him!" "Down with him!" "Make mince-meat of him!" and the like? Do they form a ring, cry for "fair play," and insist that the difference shall be determined then and there by brute force, the man with the strongest biceps, and the most ponderous fist, to be the "best" man? Nothing of the sort ever came under our observation, and is it too much to say that it never comes under the observation of any one? The density of population and the tangled community of interests, do indeed lead to constant quarrels and disputes, of all degrees of violence. Relatively speaking, however, few of these come to violence, and of that violence a relatively small part is serious. For the most part a Chinese quarrel is a reviling match, low language and high words. But an infinitesimal fraction of the participants in Chinese fights, is seriously disabled, in other respects than that by incessant bawling they have become hoarse. We should be surprised to hear that anyone ever saw a Chinese crowd egg on combatants. What we have all seen, what we always expect to see, we all know. It is the instant and spontaneous appearance on the scene, of the peace-maker. He is double, perhaps quadruple. Each of the peace-makers seizes a roaring belligerent, and tranquillizes him with good advice. As soon as he finds himself safely in charge of the peace-maker, the principal in the fight becomes doubly furious. He has judiciously postponed losing control of himself, until there is some one else ready to take that control, and then he gives way to spasms of apparent fury, unquestionably innocuous both to himself, and to others. In his most furious moments, a

Chinese is amenable to "reason," for which he has not only a theoretical, but a very practical respect. Who ever saw a belligerent turn and rend the officious peace-maker, who is holding him from flying at his foe? This is the crucial point in the struggle. Even in his fury, the Chinese recognizes the desirableness of peace—in the abstract—only he thinks in his concrete case, peace is inapplicable. The peace-maker judges differently, and nearly always drags away the bellicose reviler, who yells back to his opponent malignant defiance as he goes.

It is this peaceable quality of the Chinese, which makes him a valuable social unit. He loves order, and respects law, even when it is not in itself respectable. Of all Asiatic peoples, the Chinese are probably the most easily governed, when governed on lines to which they are accustomed. A social machinery so complicated as that of China, must often creak, and sometimes bend under extreme pressure. Yet it seldom actually breaks beneath the strain, for, like the human body, the Chinese body politic is provided with little sacs of lubricating fluids, which are distilled, a drop at a time, exactly when and where they are wanted. Doubtless there are other forms of civilization, which are in many or in most points superior to that of China, but perhaps there are few which would sustain the tension to which Chinese society has for ages, been subject, and it may be that there is none better entitled to claim the benediction once pronounced on the peace-makers.

CHAPTER XII.

SOCIAL TYPHOONS.

THE world "typhoon" (Chinese *ta-fung*, "great wind") is employed to designate a species of violent storms which are experienced along the coasts of Tongking and of China, as well as on the south-eastern coast of Japan. They differ from similar storms in other parts of the world, in their violence. There is a sudden depression of the barometer, which sometimes falls two or three inches in an hour. At the centre of the storm, the barometer may drop to 28 or even to 27. The destructive character of the typhoon is due to the enormous difference of atmospheric pressure between neighbouring places, and the consequent rapidity of the fluctuation. As the sea level is highest at the centre, a high wave is frequently found to accompany the typhoon, carrying ruin with it, and not infrequently stranding ships at a considerable distance from the sea. Those who have witnessed the destructive energy of one of these convulsions of the elements, can never lose the impression of the tremendous power of the forces which are so suddenly called into action. It sometimes happens, that when all the barometrical indications point to the probability of a typhoon, that some sudden and unanticipated change takes place in the direction of the forces, and the danger passes as quickly as it came. The natural history of the typhoon of the China coast, in its rise, development, destructive energy, and frequent dissipation, is analogous to a social phenomenon found among the Chinese people.

In a land filled with such a dense population as China, the details of the processes by which the population is kept in order, can never be unimportant or uninteresting. A foreign resident of Syria, accustomed to the furious collisions of the heterogeneous people in the lands governed by the unspeakable Turk, proposed

to one whose life had been passed among the Chinese, the natural and judicious inquiry, "How it is possible that the countless millions of China should be kept from killing each other?" If the Chinese were not, as already pointed out, an inherently peaceable people, no code of laws, and no machinery of government would suffice to produce the degree of order which is now witnessed. In order to understand one of the principal proceedings by which the normal peaceful order of Chinese society is first interrupted and then restored, we must consider the natural history of a Chinese quarrel in its inception, its development, its culmination and its close. Among a population of such unexampled density, where families often of great size are crowded together in narrow quarters, it is impossible that occasions for quarrels should not be all-pervasive. "Wash and wipe together—love and quarrel together," says the homely old English adage. The Chinese, who have so many things in common, find it comparatively easy to live up to the doctrine of this saying. "How many are there in your family?" you inquire of your neighbour. "Between ten and twenty mouths," he replies. "And do you have everything in common?" you ask. "Yes," is the most common reply. Here then are fifteen or twenty human beings, probably representing three, if not four generations, who live from the income of the same business or farm, an income which is all put into a common stock, and the wants of all the members of the family are to be met solely from this common property. Where is the society capable of withstanding the strain to which it must be subjected under conditions such as this? The grandparents are perhaps superannuated, and complain of the coarse food as tasteless, and require something better. Filial obedience, or oftener the outward shell of it, prevents even the whisper of an objection, but there are inward murmurs that the old people are growing "gluttonous." The brothers each contribute their time and strength to the common fund, but the sisters-in-law are an element of the most capital importance, and very difficult it is to harmonize them. The elder sister-in-law enjoys tyrannizing somewhat over the younger, and the younger ones are naturally jealous of the prerogatives of the elder. Each strives to make her husband feel that in this community of property, he is the one who is worsted.

The following lines are a translation of an ode, which is itself a witness to the character of the troubles here described :—

They ounger brother was shoved aside until he came to think
His elder brother's natural heart, the colour of India ink;
For when our neighbours hold a feast, quoth he, how comes it so
That we should always stay at home, and you should always go?
The silver which you value, and are gathering all the while
In course of years will aggregate a formidable pile,
And who's to care for who, I pray, when we at last divide?
Why *we* shall suffer all the loss, and then be shoved aside!

Without doubt, there must even in the best regulated families be many occasions for well grounded complaints, and mutual recriminations. The younger generation of children furnish a prolific source of domestic unpleasantness. Troubles of this nature are far from being uncommon, in well ordered homes in Western lands—how much more in the complex and compact life of the Chinese? It is a generalization of antiquity that "the weaker goes to the wall;" but where as in China, the weak are extremely weak, and the strong extremely strong, it is necessary for the preservation of society, that when the stronger has actually pushed the weaker to the wall, the former should be prevented from crushing the latter to a pulp. The means by which the Chinese seek to accomplish this end, are two-fold, the Row and the Peace-talker. The term "Row," is adopted, not as an adequate, but as perhaps the least inadequate equivalent for the Chinese phrase *ta-ch'ao-tzu.* The inherent idea in this expression is that of clamour, disturbance, uproar. The instinct of the Anglo-Saxon who has a grievance, is to get it redressed, and to punish, if he can, the person to whom the grievance is due. The instinct of the Oriental, and of the Chinese among the rest, is first of all to let the world at large know that he has a grievance. In Dickens' "American Notes," is a description of a journey taken more than forty years ago, across the Alleghany Mountains to the Ohio

river. The unhappy passengers who should have been transferred to two canal boats were, in the most unjustifiable manner, all crowded upon one boat. The travellers—who seem, like the Americans whom Mr. Herbert Spencer saw forty years later, to have been too indolent to claim their rights—made no other remonstrance, than the very negative one of grumbling. One tall figure, however, appeared upon the deck, striding back and forth, addressing his remarks to no one in particular but rather to the Universe at large. He cleft a path among the people on deck, and soliloquized as follows: "This may suit you, this may, but it don't suit me. This may be all very well with down-easters, and men of Boston raising, but it won't suit my figure nohow; and no two ways about that; and so I tell you. Now I'm from the brown forests of Mississippi, I am, and when the sun shines on me, it does shine a little. It don't glimmer where I live, the sun don't. No. I am a brown forester, I am. I ain't a Johny Cake. There are no smooth skins where I live. We're rough men there. Rather. If down-easters and men of Boston raising like this, I am glad of it, but I'm none of that raising, nor of that breed. No. This company wants a little fixing, it does. I am the wrong sort of man for them, I am. They won't like me, they won't. This is piling of it up a little too mountainious, this is." "It is impossible," says Mr. Dickens, "for me to say what terrific meaning was hidden in the words of this brown forester, but I know that the other passengers looked on in a sort of admiring horror, and that presently the boat was put back to the wharf."

This "brown forester," although hailing from Mississippi, was in temperament an Oriental. He had discovered, as all Orientals have done ages ago, that a grievance, like any other commodity, diminishes by being shared with others. It is on this principle, that a Chinese who has been wronged will go upon the street and roar at the top of his voice. This performance is called bawling a grievance *(han-yuan)*, or hallooing the street *(han-chieh)*. A small boy sent out to gather manure, leaned his fork against a building, and went inside. When he came out, his fork was gone, and he began to weep bitterly. "Have you hallooed?" he was asked, "Go and halloo." He accordingly posted himself upon the edge of the crowded fair-ground, and screamed as loudly

as he was able in the intervals of his sobbing, "Who has carried off my manure fork?"

The practice of hallooing is very seldom dissociated from another art, which the Chinese have carried to a degree of perfection, known only among Orientals—the art of reviling. The moment that a quarrel begins, abusive words of this sort are heard, poured forth in a filthy stream, to which nothing in the English language offers any parallel, and with a virulence and pertinacity suggestive of the fish-women of Billingsgate. The merest contact is often sufficient to elicit a torrent of this invective, as a touch induces the electric spark, and it is in constant and almost universal use by all classes and both sexes, always and everywhere. It is a common complaint that women use even viler language than men, and that they continue it longer, justifying the aphorism, that what Chinese women have lost in the compression of their feet seems to have been made up in the volubility of their tongues. Children just learning to talk, learn this abusive dialect from their parents and often employ it towards them, which is regarded as extremely amusing. The use of this language has become to the Chinese a kind of second nature. It is confined to no class of society. Literary graduates, and official of all ranks up to the very highest, when provoked, use it as freely as their coolies. It is even used by common people on the street, as a kind of bantering salutation, and as such is returned in kind.

Occidental curses are sometimes not loud, but deep, but Chinese maledictions are nothing if not loud. An English oath is a winged bullet, Chinese abuse is a ball of filth. Much of this abusive language is regarded as a sort of spell or curse. A man who has had the heads removed from his field of millet, stands at the entrance of the alley which leads to his dwelling, and pours forth volleys of abuse upon the unknown (though often not unsuspected) offender. This proceeding is regarded as having a double value, first as a means of notifying the public of his loss and of his consequent fury, thus freeing his mind; and second as a prophylactic, tending to secure him against the repetition of the offence. The culprit is (theoretically) in ambush, listening with something like awe to the frighful imprecations levelled at him. He cannot, of course, be sure that he is not detected, which is

often the case. Perhaps the loser knows perfectly well who it was who stole his goods, but contents himself with a public reviling, as a formal notice that the culprit is either known or suspected, and will do well to avoid the repetition of his act. If provoked too far, the loser will, it is thus tacitly proclaimed, retaliate. This is the Chinese theory of public reviling. They frankly admit, that it not only does not stop theft, but that it has no necessary tendency to prevent its repetition, since among a large population, the thieft, or other offender, is by no means certain to know that he has been reviled. The practice of "reviling the street" is often indulged in by women, who mount the flat roof of the house, and shriek away for hours at a time, or until their voices fail. A respectable family would not allow such a performance if they could prevent it, but in China as elsewhere, an enraged woman is a being difficult to restrain. Abuse delivered in this way, on general principles, attracts little or no attention, and one sometimes comes upon a man at the head of an alley, or a woman on the roof, screeching themselves red in the face, with not a single auditor in sight. If the day is a hot one, the reviler bawls as long as he (or she) has breath, then proceeds to refresh himself by a season of fanning, and afterwards returns to the attack, with renewed fury.

If a Chinese quarrel be at all violent, it is next to impossible that it should be concluded without more or less personal vilification. English travellers in the south of Europe have noted the astonishment of the Latin races, at the invariable habit of the inhabitant of the British Isles, to strike out from the shoulder if he gets into a fight. The Chinese, like the Italians, have seldom learned to box, or if they have learned, it is not scientific boxing. The first and chief resource of Chinese when matters come to extremities, is to seize the queue of their opponent, endeavouring to pull out as much hair as possible. In nine fights out of ten, where only two parties are concerned, and where neither party can lay hold of any weapon, the "fight" resolves itself simply into a hair-pulling match. But before this has gone the length of producing anything like baldness, there are sure to be third parties intervening, who seize each of the combatants, and forcibly separate them, dragging them away, reviling as they go, each shouting back his maledictions and defiance, and apparently

making the most violent efforts to free himself, in which, however, he is generally very careful not to succeed.

It has been already remarked that to strike the person who is holding him in check, never seems to occur to a Chinese, nor does he either express or feel that resentment which to an Anglo-Saxon under the same circumstances, would be inevitable.

If the reader desires to examine an account (evidently photographically accurate) of the truly Oriental performance which the Chinese call *ta-ch'ao-tzu*, or "making an uproar," let him turn to the thirty-first chapter of the book of Genesis. Jacob had been working for Laban for a great length of time, and had accumulated a great many cattle, and had married Laban's two daughters. But as the relations between the uncle and the nephew were frequently "strained," Jacob thought it a shrewd piece of policy for him to steal off, at a time when Laban was away from home, taking with him his wives and his flocks. It was three days before Laban, who was busy with his sheep shearing, heard that Jacob had left, and it was another week before Laban could overtake him. When he did, he was doubly irritated by the fact that in addition to his other offences, Jacob was supposed to have stolen Laban's gods. With a truly Oriental indignation at being called a thief, Jacob challenges Laban to search his camp, promissing that whoever has the gods, is to die, but the cunning Rachel took good care to sit on the images, and thus saved her husband's "face," and her own life. So Laban "found them not." By this time, Jacob was very angry (verse 36), and "chode with Laban." The utterance of Jacob, of his wives and of Laban, were certainly not made continuously, as the form of the narrative would lead one unacquainted with Oriental ways to suppose. The words in the text are merely the substance of the arguments on each side, spoken whenever the speaker could get a hearing. Before Jacob had got half through the second of the seven verses (36-42) assigned to his indignant speech, Laban had burst in with the taunt of verse 43, "Everything that you have is really mine, your wives are my daughters, and these sheep my flocks, you came to me empty handed, you are nobody except through me." All these remarks were offered, notwithstanding the fact, stated by Laban himself to Jacob, that he had been warned in a vision, to "speak not to Jacob either good or bad!" By the time Jacob

had begun to vociferate his reply to Laban, his wives Leah and Rachel (notwithstanding the late temporary disability of the latter) rushed out of their tents, with hair dishevelled and resembling a pair of ragged palm mats, screaming at the top of their voices. The substance of their objurgations is given in verses 14 to 16; "We have nothing to do with him—he has sold us—he has cheated us—he wants to take away what God has given us through our husband—he has searched us—he has disgraced us," etc., etc., etc. Such a domestic typhoon would seem to be ruinous, such a quarrel impossible of adjustment. Far from it! The parties are Orientals, and not Anglo-Saxons. After having thoroughly freed their minds on every aspect of the subject, they gradually begin to grow more cool. Either through the "peace-talking" of the head retainers or without them, they begin to discourse reason *(shuo-li)*, "Come come, (verse 44), let us be reasonsble; let us compromise matters. Take your cattle and your flocks—be kind to my girls—do not marry any more of other people's girls—let us pile up a great heap of stones for a witness." With this understanding, and the inevitable meal (verse 54) which must mark the adjustment of all Oriental disputes, the curtain drops, and each party goes its way.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DREAD OF GIVING OFFENCE.

No adequate comprehension of the Chinese social system is possible, until we have familiarized ourselves with the fact of solidarity, which is one of its most marked features. Of this compendious subject we have already treated to some extent, but it is now necessary to return to it in more detail. It has been already pointed out that in this respect, the social circumstances of the Chinese are at the greatest possible remove from the condition of things in most Western lands, where fluidity, rather than solidity, seems to be the rule. Let us suppose the case of a foreigner resident in China, who comes from no matter which of the Occidental countries represented here. He has been in China for a length of time, but he probably does not intend to remain here during his natural life. When he has reached some distant limit, he may expect to return to his native land. When he does so, where will he make his home? Wherever his interests, his convenience or his tastes dictate, and there is no more persumption that he will go to the village where he happens to have been born, than there is that he will go to any other village, and much less likelihood of it, than there is that he will settle in the village there his wife happened to be born. If he has an "estate" this may determine his movements, and again he may not improbably dispose of his property, and purchase elsewhere in a distant part of the country.

All this, we must repeat is totally different in China. In this land of devotion to a fixed spot, the citizen is represented by the bee, who though flying ever so widely, always returns to her hive at last. Occidentals are rather imaged in the irresponsible grasshopper, which like Little Jo "moves on," and often appears to have no special attachment to one place rather then to another,

except as the facilities for living off the country may dictate. Thus the Chinese is practically rooted to one point on the surface of this expansive planet, and though he may have wide experience of other regions, this one spot alone is home. It follows from these considerations, that that vast majority of the whole population who do not travel will never have any other associations than those connected with their homes. The same persons who were their neighbours when they were children, are their neighbours now. No one moves in, no one moves out. The complexion of society changes only by the disappearance of the aged, and the victims of disease or accident, and by the addition of the incessant stream of little ones, all of them parts of the same village and often of the same family circle. In a state of things like this, it is inevitable that in a general way, there should be no secrets. Everybody knows everything about everybody else, and in return everyone knows everything about him. In an ideal state of society, such a community of information and of interests is no doubt idyllic. But Chinese society is very far from being idyllic, and the practical outcome of the social facts which we are now considering, is to put every human being in Chinese society, to a large extent in the power of many human beings, for the use of whose power, there is no guarantee of any sort.

The kinds of injury which one person can inflict upon another in China are extremely various, but they may be roughly divided into two classes, private and public. To the former class belong the innumerable devices by which those who have money or other property are done out of it, the destruction of property by fire, damage to standing crops, and many other like acts. The liability to wrongs of this sort is generally in the direct ratio of the amount of one's possessions, unless one has some counter method of defending himself, as by a kind of social lightning-rod, which shall receive the shock, and render it harmless or even make it react. For this purpose there are several devices, some of them very ingenious, but despite of them all, the risk which everyone who has anything to lose, must necessarily run, is very great.

Under the head of what may be termed public injuries comes the whole catalogue of woes comprehended in China in the term "lawsuit," a pregnant noun of a terrific wealth and variety of significance. Let the reader think for a moment of the countless

multitudes whom he everywhere sees about him in China and then reflect that there is not one of them all, man, woman or child, who is not liable to be plunged into the depths of misery, by the sudden advent of a lawsuit, into which he is dragged through no fault of his own it may be, but the remoter consequences of which, may be utter ruin. Instances of this ruin are of constant occurrence everywhere, and in view of the possibilities involved, it is not strange that all Chinese are naturally suspicious, especially of those whom they do not know, lest from some unexpected quarter, evil come upon them remedilessly.

There is a story of a party of army officers in India, where all forms of reptile life abound, camping out at night, during the course of which, a poisonous serpent contrived to wind himself about the body of one of the company. The latter was awakened by feeling this creature swaying over him, its tongue darting out at frequent intervals, and its whole attitude one of defiance. The unhappy man dared not make a sound nor a movement, which would have been instant death, but was obliged to lie like a corpse, watching this venomous serpent, for a period of three hours, when a comrade fortunately awoke, and by a lucky "snap shot," blew off the head of the reptile with a discharge of his revolver.

This anecdote affords an excellent illustration of the situation in which many Chinese spend their lives. There is near them at all times, a powerful and deadly enemy, who may make a spring at any moment, the consequences of which may be most disastrous. Hence the Chinese have developed an instinct of secretiveness, which is often one of the marked features of their social life. A man, who is not known, is liable to be an enemy in disguise, and at all events it will be safer so to consider him, until the contrary is established. Thus it comes about, but while, as often pointed out, in China everyone knows everything, sometimes there is nothing more difficult than to ascertain for certain that which everyone knows. "There is no hedge which excludes the wind," as the saying goes, that is, there is nothing which can keep "wind" (rumour) from spreading. But discriminating Chinese wind blows only for certain hedges, and he who does not know the secret—which the boatmen profess to know—of "calling the wind," will wait for a long time to ascertain what to all but him is borne on

every breeze. "Face" is so important a factor in Chinese life, that no one wishes to endanger his own peace, by incurring the enmity of any one who has "face," and the man who can collect on his side the greatest array of persons of age, rank, wealth a prestige, is the man whom no one will on any account offend.

Official life in China is largely a game in which these elements are the cards, with which the sleeves are well stocked. The man who has the most of them, or who can use what he has to the best effect, is the man who will, for the time, win the game, which is to get all he can, and keep all that he gets. Yet while this represents in outline what we have no hesitation in calling a truth, it is not all the truth, for one is seldom embarrassed in China by knowing the whole of any subject.

Another curious phase of this topic is the remarkable phenomenon in the Chinese government, known as the Censorate. Here is a considerable body of men, who are supposed to be acting in the interests of their own ideals, and who, whenever they see any irregularity in any official, nay in the Son of Heaven himself, are supposed to make it known to the Emperor, who (like all other officers) is thus in the presence of a chronic Day-of-Judgment, to which he is himself amenable, albeit he is himself the sole judge of every case. The antecedent probabilities of the Chinese social structure would seem to be against the invention of any such tribunal as the Censorate, as well as against its efficient action, when it is constructed. Yet there can be no doubt from the little that is allowed to filter through the semi-opaque medium of the *Peking Gazette*, that these officers do really brave a great amount of obloquy in some cases, and sometimes appear to delight in giving as much offence to all concerned as possible. But this after all may be nothing but a kind of give-and-take arrangement, subject to the laws which are seen to govern the most ordinary Chinese transactions.

The practical relations, which the Chinese dread of giving offence to their countrymen bear to foreigners, are many and important. It controls our employés, to a degree which is often little suspected. We have decided to dismiss an objectionable servant, and mentally resolve to promote one more worthy to his place, when to our chagrin, both servants disappear at once and forever, one of them for no assignable cause. By this we mean

no cause that we can assign, through every other servant knows that the second servant left, not because he wished to do so, but because the first one would not allow him to remain. Everyone has found that a Chinese scholar in foreign service cannot be replaced by another, as long as he has not been actually discharged. There is sound basis for the common saying, "If the old does not go, the new will not come," that is he will not dare to do so.

The principle which we are considering helps to explain what must have appeared to many persons at some stage of their experiences in China, very singular, that whenever a case of any complexity arises, it is next to impossible to get at the "bottom facts." The reason is perfectly simple. There are often no facts, and not infrequently there is, as the pilots say, "no bottom." The fact that some person with whom we happen to be concerned is a gambler, or an opium smoker, becomes highly probable, but we cannot prove it. It is one of those secrets the magnitude of which is gauged by the number of people who are in it; but the facts, well-known as they are, will be successfully kept from the foreigner for a long time, illustrating the difficulty, already mentioned, of getting at a notorious truth. There may be a great deal of electricity in the air, and abundant evidences of its presence, while it is yet hard to materialize it into a spark, which shall give light.

The secretive habits of the Chinese in regard to matters which may be the occasion to themselves of trouble, render the execution of Chinese justice, in its best estate, a matter very different from that to which we are accustomed. Of evidence in our sense of the term, it would seem as if the Chinese have no knowledge, and for it they do not appear to care. Many of the Chinese judicial processes resemble the practice which is said to prevail with French lovers, who, when they grow tired of one another write a note, simply saying, "Farewell, I know all." There is usually enough to be known, so this ends the matter. It is generally safe to assume that if a particular charge cannot be adequately sustained, others just as bad may be true, and the truth is found not by a minute examination, but by a balancing of probabilities, combined with a large percentage of shrewd guessing. A dying man was recommended by the priest to

"renounce the devil, and all his works," to which he made the suggestive reply, "I'm going to a strange country, and I don't want to make meself any inimies!" The Chinese is in a country which he understands too well to make himself needless "inimies" —especially if it is merely to please a foreigner.

CHAPTER XIV.

POLITENESS.

THERE are two quite different aspects in which the politeness of the Chinese, and of Oriental peoples generally may be viewed, the one of appreciation, the other of criticism. The Anglo-Saxon has no doubt, many virtues, as we are fond of reminding ourselves, and among them is to be found a very large percentage of *fortiter in re*, but a very small percentage of *suaviter in modo.* When therefore, we come to the Orient, and find the vast populations of the immense Asiatic continent so greatly our superiors in the art of lubricating the friction which is sure to arise in the intercourse of man with man, we are filled with that admiration which is the tribute of those who cannot do a thing, to those who can do it easily and well. The most bigoted critic of the Chinese is forced to admit that they have brought the practice of politeness to a pitch of perfection, which is not only unknown in Western lands, but previous to experience, is unthought of, and almost unimaginable.

The rules of ceremony, we are reminded in the classics, are three hundred, and the rules of behaviour, three thousand. Under such a load as this, it would seem as if it were unreasonable to hope for the continuance of a race of human beings, but we very soon discover that the Chinese have contrived to make their ceremonies, as they have made their education, an instinct rather than an acquirement. The genius of this people has made the punctilio which in Occidental lands is relegated to the use of Courts, and to the intercourse of diplomatic life, a part of the routine of daily contact with others. We do not mean that in their everyday life the Chinese are bound by such an intricate and complex mass of rules as we have mentioned, but that the code, like a set of holiday clothes, is always to be put on when

the occasion for it arises, which happens at certain junctures, the occurrence of which the Chinese recognize by an unerring instinct. On such occasions, not to know what to do, would be for a Chinese as ridiculous, as for an educated man in the Western land, not to be able to tell, on occasion, how many nine times nine are.

The difficulty of Occidental appreciation of Chinese politeness, is that we have in mind such ideas as are embodied in the definition which affirms that "politeness is real kindness, kindly expressed." So it may be in the view of a civilization which has learned to regard the welfare of one as (theoretically) the welfare of all, but in China politeness is nothing of this sort. It is a ritual of technicalities, which like all technicalities, are important, not as the indices of a state of mind or of heart, but as individual parts of a complex whole. The whole theory and practice of the use of honorific terms so bewildering, not to say maddening to the Occidental, is simply that these expressions help to keep in view those fixed relations of graduated superiority, which are regarded as essential to the conservation of society. They also serve as lubricating fluids, as already remarked, to smooth human intercourse. Each antecedent has its consequent, and each consequent its antecedent, and when both antecedent and consequent are in the proper place, everything goes on well. It is like a game of chess in which the first party observes, "I move my insignificant King's pawn, two squares." To which his companion responds, "I move my humble King's pawn, in the same manner." His antagonist then announces, "I attack your honourable King's pawn, with my contemptible King's knight, to his King's bishop's third," and so on through the game. The game is not affected by the employment of the adjectives, but just as the chess-player who should be unable to announce his next move would make himself ridiculous, by attempting what he does not understand, so the Chinese who should be ignorant of the proper ceremonial reply to any given move, is the laughing-stock of everyone, because in the case of the Chinese, the adjectives *are the game itself*, and not to know them, is to know nothing.

At the same time, the rigidity of Chinese etiquette varies directly as the distance from the centres at which it is most essential, and when one gets among rustics, though there is the same

appreciation of its necessity, there is by no means the familiarity with the detailed requirements, which is found in an urban population. An Indian paper gives an account of a game of lawn tennis, played in Simla, after the regular players had gone to dinner. The coolie who came to pick up the balls was surprised to see in the dusk a whole troop of people engaged in batting and catching, with all the zest of experts. Wondering much who they could be, he came a little nearer, and discovered that they were monkeys, who had often witnessed the game from the tops of adjacent trees, and who now essayed to "bear a hand" themselves. On finding themselves discovered, the monkeys fled to the tops of the trees, stuffing as many of the balls as possible into their capacious mouths, as souvenirs of their initiation into society ways. One is sometimes reminded of this incident in the behaviour of the rustic, who has more theoretical acquaintance with the rules of the social game, than practical experience of it.

But it must at the same time be admitted that there are very few Chinese who do not know the proper thing to be done at a given time, incomparably better than the most cultivated foreigner who, as compared with them, is a mere infant in arms; generally, unless he has had a long preliminary experience, filled with secret terror, lest he should make a wrong move, and thus betray the superficial nature of his knowledge. It is this evident and self-confessed incapacity to comply with the very alphabet of Chinese ceremonial politeness, which makes the educated classes of China look with such undisguised (and not unnatural) contempt, on the "Barbarians," who do not understand "the round and the square," and who, even when they have been made acquainted with the beauties of the usages of polite life, manifest such disdainful indifference, as well as such invincible ignorance.

Politeness has been likened to an air-cushion. There is nothing in it, but it eases the jolts wonderfully. At the same time it is only fair to add that the politeness which the Chinese exercises to the foreigner (as well as much of that which he displays to his own people) is oftener prompted by a desire to show that he really understand the proper moves to be made, than by a wish to do that which will be agreeable to the wishes of his guest. He insists on making a fire, which you do not want, in order to steep a cup of tea for you, which you detest, and in so

doing, fills your eyes with smoke, and your throat with a sensation of having swallowed a decoction of marshmallows; but the host has at least established the proposition that he knows how a guest ought to be treated, and if the guest is not pleased, so much the worse for the guest. In the same manner the rural host, who thinks it is his duty to have the humble apartment in which you are to be lodged, swept and (figuratively) garnished, postpones this process until you have already arrived, and despite your entreaties to desist, he will not, though he put your eyes out with the dust of ages which he raises. The Book of Rites teaches, perhaps, that a room shall be swept, and swept it shall be, whatever the agonies of the traveller in the process. The same rule holds at feasts, those terrors of the uninitiated (and not seldom of the too initiated), where the zealous host is particular to pile on your plate the things that it is good for you to like, regardless of the fact that you do not want them, and cannot swallow a morsel of them. So much the worse for you, he seems to say, but of one thing he is sure, he will not be lacking in *his* part. No one shall be able to accuse him of not having made the proper moves at the proper times. If the foreigner does not know the game, that is his own affair, not that of the host.

It was upon this principle that a Chinese bride, whose duty it had become to call upon a foreign lady, deliberately turned her back upon the latter, and made her obeisance toward a totally different quarter, to the amazement and annoyance of her hostess. Upon subsequent inquiry, it turned out that the bride had performed her *k'o-t'ou* to the north because that is the direction of the abode of the Emperor, no attention being paid to the circumstance that the person to whom the bride was supposed to be paying her respects was on the south side of the room. If the foreign lady did not know enough to take her place on the proper side of the room, the bride did not consider that any concern of hers; she, at least, would show that *she* knew in what direction to knock her head!

A foreigner who had been invited to a wedding at which bread-cakes are provided in abundance, observed that when the feast was well advanced, a tray was produced containing only two or three bread-cakes, which were ostentatiously offered as being hot (if any preferred them so). They were first passed to the

foreigner as the guest of honour, who merely declined them with thanks. For some unexplained reason, this seemed to throw a kind of gloom over the proceedings, and the tray was withdrawn without being passed to any one else. It is the custom for each guest at a wedding to contribute a fixed sum towards the expenses of the occasion. It was the usage of this locality to collect these contributions while the guest were still at the table, but as it would not conform to Chinese ideas of propriety to *ask* a guest for his offering, it was done under the guise of passing him hot biscuit. Everyone understood this polite fiction, except the ill-informed foreigner, whose refusal rendered it improper for any one else to make his contribution at that time. At a subsequent wedding to which he was invited in the same family, this foreigner was interested in hearing the master of ceremonies, taught by dear experience, remark to the guests with more than Occidental directness, "*This is the place for those who have accounts to come in and settle them!*"

After all abatements have been made, for the tediously minute, and the often irksome detail of trifles of which Chinese politeness takes account, and for all of which it prescribes regulations, it still remains true that we have much to learn from the Chinese in the item of social intercourse. It is quite possible to retain our sincerity, without retaining all our brusqueness, and the sturdy independence of the Occident would be all the better for the admixture of a certain amount of Oriental suavity.

There are, however, many Occidentals who could never be brought to look at the matter in this light. An acquaintance of the writer's resided for so many years in Paris, that he had unconsciously adopted the manners of that capital. When at length he returned to London, he was in the habit of removing his hat, and making a courteous bow to every friend whom he met. Upon one occasion, one of the latter returned his salutation, with the somewhat unsympathetic observation, "See here, old fellow, *none of your French monkey tricks here!*" Happy the man who is able to combine all that is best in the East and in the West, and who can walk securely alone the narrow and often thorny path of the Golden Mean.

CHAPTER XV.

BENEVOLENCE.

The Chinese have placed the term Benevolence at the head of their list of Five Constant Virtues. The character which denotes it is composed of the symbols for "Man" and "Two," by which is supposed to be shadowed forth the view, that benevolence is something which ought to be developed by the contact of any two human beings with each other. It is unnecessary to remark that the theory which the form of the character seems to favour is not at all substantiated by the facts of life among the Chinese, as those facts are to be read by the intelligent and attentive observer. Nevertheless, it is far from being true, as a superficial examination would seem to indicate, that there is among the Chinese no benevolence, though this has been often predicated, by those who ought to have known the truth. "The feeling of pity," as Mencius reminds us, "is common to all men," widely as they differ in its expression. The mild and in some respects really benevolent teachings of the Buddhist religion have not been without a visible effect upon the Chinese people. There is, moreover, among the Chinese, a strong practical instinct in every direction, and when the attention has been once directed, by no matter what cause, toward the "practice of virtue," there are a great variety of forms in which there is certain to be abundant scope for the exercise of benevolence.

Among the forms of benevolence which have commended themselves to the Chinese may be named the establishment of foundling hospitals, and refuges for lepers, and for the aged, etc. As China is a land which for all practical purposes (except that of the delectation of Peking sinologues) is quite free from a census, it is impossible to ascertain to what extent these forms of benevolent action are to be found, but it is hazarding little to say that

they must be relatively rare, that is to say, as regards the enormous population, and the enormous aggregation of that population in huge hives, where the needs are greatest. The vast soup-kitchens which are set up anywhere and everywhere, when some great flood or famine calls for them, are familiar phenomena, as well as the donation of winter clothing to those who are destitute. It is not the government only which engages in these enterprizes, but the people also co-operate in a highly creditable manner, and instances are not uncommon, in which large sums have been thus judiciously expended.

We do not reckon among the benevolences of the Chinese such associations as the provincial clubs for care of those who may be destitute at a distance from home, and who could not without this help, return, or who having died, could not otherwise be taken home to be buried. This is an ordinary business transaction, of the nature of insurance, and is probably so regarded by the Chinese themselves. Besides the regular institutions already mentioned, and others similar, there are societies for the providing of coffins for those too poor to buy them, for gathering human bones which have in the course of time become exposed, and which are to be again buried in a suitable manner, and the gathering up of paper on which the character has been written or printed, that it may be burned, to save it from desecration. In some places plasters of a mysterious nature are also given to all applicants, free vaccination is (theoretically) furnished, and "virtue books" are provided for sale at a price below cost, or even given away. To items of this class must be added the constant donations to the army of beggars with which China is cursed, and help to refugees, who are a more respectable variety of beggars.

Having mentioned some of the most deserving forms of Chinese benevolence, it is only fair to specify the drawbacks which accompany them. In the first place, such fixed institutions as hospitals, etc. are, as remarked, relatively rare. They are to be found in many of the large sea-ports, and perhaps in the great cities of the interior along the routes of trade, but do they exist at all, in any except the very largest cities? If so, it is certain that they are singularly unobstrusive, for one never sees or hears of them. The same observation is to be made in regard to other

organized charities, they are few in number, and narrow in the range of their action. Again, with the exception of such institutions as have been mentioned, the ordinary forms of Chinese benevolence are exceedingly intermittent.

When a vast calamity occurs, like the great famine, or the outburst of the Yellow River, the government, local or general, comes to the front with a greater or less degree of promptness, and attempts to help the victims. But instead of doing this on any uniform and extensive scale, such as the perpetual recurrence of the necessity might seem to suggest, it is done in a make-shift way, as if the occasion had never before arisen, and might never arise again. The care of the refugees is moreover generally abandoned, at the very time when they most need help, namely, in the early spring, when, having been weakened by their long suffering, and by atrocious over-crowding, they are most liable to disease. It is then that they are sent away, with a little ready money, to make the best of their way home, and to get back into their normal state of life as best they can. The reason for this is apparent. The government knows that they will die of pestilence if they remain till warm weather where they are, and destruction in detail seems to the officials to be a less, because a less conspicuous evil, than death in masses.

The same spirit is evinced in the curious ebullition of charitableness, which is known as the *la-pa-chiu*. This performance may be regarded as in most respects a typical case of Chinese benevolence. On the eighth day of the twelfth moon (called the "*la-yueh*,") it is the custom for everyone who has accumulated a quantity of benevolent impulses, which have had no opportunity for their gratification, to make the most liberal donations to all comers, of the very cheapest and poorest quality of soup, during about twelve hours of solar time, "be the same more or less." This is called "practising virtue," and is considered to be a means of laying up merit.* If the year happens to be one in which the

* The origin of this celebration does not appear to be generally known. As an explanation of it, and as containing some curious details in regard to the ceremonies observed, the following extract from the *Shih Pao*, a native Chinese paper, will be of interest to some:—

"The 8th of the 12th moon this year, the 29th December, was the anniversary of the date when Buddha prefected his doctrines and give them to the world. In celebrating this event, it has long been customary for the Imperial

harvest is bountiful, those who live in the country have perhaps no applicants for their coarse provender, as even the poorest people have as good or better at home. This circumstance does not, however, lead to the prætermission of the offer, much less to the substitution of anything of a better quality. On the contrary, the donors advertise their intentions, with the same alacrity as in other years, not to say with greater, and when the day passes and no one has asked for a single bowl of the rich gruel designed for them, it is merely put into the broken jars out of which the pigs are fed, and the wealthy man of practical benevolence retires to rest with the proud satisfaction, that however it may be with the poor wretches who would not come to his feast, he at least has done his duty for another year, and can in good conscience pose as a man of practical benevolence and virtue. But if, on the other hand, the year should be a bad one, and grain rises to a fabulous price, then this same man of means and of virtue fails to send out any notices of the "practice of virtue" for this particular year, for the reason that he cannot afford it!

We have already referred to the donations to beggars, of whom one almost everywhere sees a swarm. This donation also is of the nature of an insurance. In the cities, the beggars are, as is well-known, organized into guilds of a very powerful sort, more powerful by far, than any with which they can have to contend, for the reason that the beggars have nothing to lose, and nothing to fear, in which respects they stand alone. The shopkeeper who should refuse a donation to a stalwart beggar, after the latter has waited for a reasonable length of time, and has besought with what the Geneva arbitrators styled "due diligence,"

Household to make a gift in money to certain revered Llamas residing at the Capital, who in return, present a combination porridge, made of beans, rice, fruits, etc., eight ingredients in all, commonly called *La-pa-chiu.*

"This year, upon the recurrence of the event, the Imperial Household presented to the Llamas of the Yung Ho Monastery Tls. 500, nominally as the sum required for the preparation of the porridge above-described. On the afternoon of the day previous, the customary porridge having been duly prepared by the Llamas, two officers of the highest rank were delegated to inspect the same, and early the next morning this porridge was reverentially poured into a wooden pail, the inside of which was gilded. For a cover to this pail, a piece of yellow satin with dragon figures embroidered in gold was used. This pail with its contents was then carried into the palace, to be partaken of by His Imperial Majesty and the members of the Imperial Household."

would be liable to an invasion of a horde of famished wretches, who would render the existence even of a stolid Chinese, a burden, and who would utterly prevent the transaction of any business, until their continually rising demands should be met. Both the shopkeepers and the beggars understand this perfectly well, and it is for this reason that benevolences of this nature flow in a steady, be it a tiny rill.

The same principle, with obvious modifications, applies to the small donations to the incessant stream of refugees, to be seen so often in so many places. In all these cases it will be observed that the object in view is by no means the benefit of the person upon whom the "benevolence" terminates, but the extraction from the benefit conferred, of a return benefit for the giver. Every object of Chinese charity is regarded as a "little Jo," and the main aim of those who have anything to do with him, is to make it reasonably certain that he will "move on." To the other disabilities of Chinese benevolence must be added this capital one, that it is almost impossible for any enterprize, however good or however urgent, to escape the withering effects of the Chinese system of squeezes, which is as well organized as any other part of the scheme of Chinese government. It is not easy to possess one's self of full details of the working of any regular Chinese charity, but enough has been observed during such special crisis as the great famine, to make it certain that the deepest distress of the people is no barrier whatever to the most shameful peculation on the part of officials entrusted with the disbursement of funds for relief. And if such scandals take place under these circumstances, when public attention is most fixed on the distress and its relief, it is not difficult to conjecture what happens when there is no outside knowledge either of the funds contributed, or of their use.

We have repeatedly referred to the comparative insignificance of the range of Chinese charity, but how narrow that range is, when considered in the light of the achievements of Western lands, can best be understood by an examination of the table of contents of such an admirable work as Dr. Faber's book on Occidental civilization, published in Chinese, under the title "From West to East." Such institutions as asylum for the feeble-minded, for the insane, for the deaf and dumb, and for various varieties

of diseases, together with a multitude of others, must seem to the Chinese, like the products of unusually lively imaginations, reminding them of nothing which they ever saw or heard of.

When they come to know more of that Occidental civilization, of which too often only the worst side obtrudes itself upon them, it will certainly seem to them not a little remarkable, that all Christendom is dotted with institutions, such as have no parallel out of Christendom, and then it will perhaps occur to them to inquire into the rationale of so significant a fact. They may be led to notice the suggestive circumstance, that the Chinese character for benevolence, unlike most of those which relate to the emotions which generally have the heart-radical, is written *without the heart.* The virtue for which it stands, is too often, also, practiced without heart, with the general results, some of which we have noticed. That state of mind, in which practical philanthropy becomes an *instinct*, demanding opportunity to exhibit its workings, whenever the need of it is clearly perceived, may be said to be almost wholly wanting among the Chinese. It is not, indeed, a human development. If it is to be created among the Chinese, it must be by the same process which has made it an integral constituent of life in the lands of the West.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DISREGARD OF TIME.

It is a maxim of the developed civilization of our day, that "Time is money." The complicated arrangements of modern life are such, that a business man in business hours is able to do an amount and variety of business, which in the past century would have required the expenditure of time indefinitely greater. Steam and electricity have accomplished this change, and it is a change for which the Anglo-Saxon race was prepared beforehand by its constitutional tendencies. Whatever may have been the habits of our ancestors when they had little or nothing to do but to eat, drink and fight, we find it difficult to imagine a period when our race was not characterized by that impetuous energy which ever drives the individuals of it onward, to do something else, as soon as another something is finished.

There is a significant difference in the salutations of the Chinese and of the Anglo-Saxons. The former says to his comrade, whom he casually meets, "Have you eaten rice?" The latter asks, "How do you *do?*" Doing is the normal condition of the one, as eating is the normal condition of the other. From that feeling which to us has become a second nature, that time is money, and under ordinary circumstances, is to be improved to its final second, the Chinese, like most Orientals, are singularly free. There are only twelve hours in the Chinese day, and the names of these hours do not designate simply the point where one of them gives places to another, as when we say three o'clock, but denote as well all the time covered by the twelfth part of a day which each of them connotes. In this way the term "noon," which would seem as definite as any, is employed of the entire period from 11 to 1 o'clock. "What time is it?" a Chinese inquired in our hearing, "when it is noon by the moon?"

Phrased in less ambiguous language, the question which he intended to propound was this: "What is the time of night, when the moon is at the meridian?" Similar uncertainties pervade almost all the notes of times which occur in the language of every day life. "Sunrise" and "sunset" are as definite as anything in Chinese can be expected to be, though used with much latitude (and much longitude as well) but "midnight," like "noon," means nothing in particular, and the ordinary division of the night by "watches," is equally vague, with the exception of the last one, which is often associated with the appearance of daylight. Outside of cities or perhaps in a few large towns, there is no notice taken of the divisions of the day and even in the cities, the "watches" are of more or less uncertain duration. Of the portable time-pieces which we designate by this name, the Chinese, as a people, know nothing, and but the tiniest fraction of those who really own watches, govern their movements by them, even if they have the watches cleaned once every few years, and ordinarily keep them running, which is not often the case. The common people are quite content to tell their time by the altitude of the sun, which is variously described as one, two, or more "flag-staffs," or if the day is cloudy, a general result can be arrived at by observing the contraction and dilation of the pupil of a cat's eye, and such a result is quite accurate enough for all ordinary purposes.

The Chinese use of time, corresponds to the exactness of their measures of its flight. According to the distinction described by Sydney Smith, the world is divided into two classes of persons, the antediluvians, and the post-diluvians. Among the latter the discovery has been made that the age of man no longer runs into the centuries which verge on a millennium, and accordingly they study compression, and adaptation to their environment. The antediluvians, on the contrary, cannot be made to realize that the days of Methusaleh have gone by, and they continue to act as if life were still laid out on the continental plan, as in the patriarchal days.

Among these "antediluvians" the Chinese are to be reckoned. A good Chinese story-teller, such as are employed in the tea-shops to attract and retain customers, reminds one of Tennyson's "Brook." Men may come and men may go," but *he* goes

on "forever ever," he goes on "forever!" The same is true of theatrical exhibitions, which sometimes last for days, though they fade into insignificance in comparison with those of Siam, where we are assured by those who claim to have survived one of them, they are known to hold for two months together! The feats of Chinese jugglers are exceedingly clever, when well done, and very amusing, but they have one fatal defect, they are so long drawn out by the prolix and inane conversation of the participants, that long before they are done, the foreign spectator will have regretted that he ever weakly consented to patronize them. Not less formidable, but rather far more so, are the interminable Chinese feasts (to which in another connection, we have already referred), with their almost incredible number and variety of courses the terror and despair of all who have experienced them, we mean all foreigners, for to the Chinese, these entertainments are but too short. One of their most pensive sayings observes that "There is no feast in the world which must not break up at last," though to the unhappy barbarian lured into one of these traps, this hopeful generality is often lost in despair of the particular.

From his earliest years, the Chinese in thoroughly accustomed to doing everything on the antediluvian plan. When he goes to school, he goes for the day, extending to all the period from sunrise to dark, with one or two intermissions for food. Of any other system, neither pupils nor master have ever heard. The examinations for degrees are protracted through several days and nights, with all grades of severity, and while most of the candidates experience much inconvenience from such an irrational course, it would be difficult to convince any of them of its inherent absurdity as a test of intellectual attainments.

The products of the minds of those thus educated are redolent of the processes through which they have passed. The Chinese language itself, we need not pause so remark, is essentially antediluvian, and requires the age of Methusaleh to overtake it. It is as just to say of the ancient Chinese, as of the ancient Romans, that if they have been obliged to learn their own language, they would never have said or written anything worth setting down! Chinese histories are antediluvian, not merely in their attempts to go back to the ragged edge of zero for a point of departure, but in the interminable length of the sluggish and

turbit current which bears on its bosom not only the mighty vegetation of past ages, but wood, hay, and stubble past all reckoning. None but a relatively timeless race could either read or compose such histories; none but the Chinese memory could store them away in its capacious "abdomen."

But in no circumstances is the Chinese indifference to the lapse of time more annoying to a foreigner than when the occasion is a mere social call. Such calls in Western lands are recognized as having certain limits, beyond which they must not be protracted. In China, however, there are no limits. As long as the host does not offer his guest accommodations for the night, the guest must keep on talking, though he be expiring with fatigue. In calling on foreigners the Chinese can by no possibility realize that there is an element of time, which is precious. They will sit by the hour together, offering few or no observations of their own, and by no means offering to depart. The excellent pastor who had for this motto the saying, "The man who wants to see me, is the man I want to see," would have modified this dictum materially, had he lived for any length of time in China. After a certain experince of this sort, he would not improbably have followed the example of another busy clergyman, who hung conspicuously in his study the scriptural motto "The Lord bless *thy goings out!*" The mere enunciation of his business often seems to cost a Chinese a mental wrench of a violent character. For a long time he says nothing, and he can endure this for a period of time sufficient to wear out the patience of ten Europeans. Then when he opens his mouth, he realizes the truth of the adage which declares that "it is easy to go on the mountains to fight tigers, but to open your mouth and out with a thing—this is hard!" Happy is the foreigner situated like the late lamented Dr. Mackenzie, who, finding that his incessant relays of Chinese guests, the friends "who come but never go," were squandering the time which belonged to his hospital work, was wont to say to them, "Sit down and make yourselves at home, I have urgent business, and must be excused." As yet more happy would he be, if he were able to imitate the naïve terseness of a student of Chinese who having learned a few phrases, desired to experiment with them on the teacher, and who accordingly filled him with stupefaction by remarking at the end of a lesson, "Open the door! Go!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DISREGARD OF ACCURACY.

ATTENTION has been already directed to the fact that the first impression which a stranger receives of the Chinese, is that of uniformity. Their physiognomy appears to be all of one type, they all seem to be clad in one perpetual blue, the "hinges" of the national eye, do not look as if they were "put on straight," and the resemblance between one Chinese queue and another, is the likeness between a pair of peas emanating from the same pod. But in a very brief experience, the most unobservant traveller learns that whatever else may be predicated of the Chinese, a dead level of uniformity cannot be safely assumed. The speech of any two districts, no matter how contiguous, varies in some interesting and perhaps unaccountable ways. Divergences of this sort accumulate, until they are held to be tantamount to a new "dialect," and there are not wanting those who will gravely assure us that in China there are a great number of different "languages" spoken, albeit the written character is the same. The same variations, as we are often reminded, obtain in regard to customs, which according to a saying current among the Chinese, do not run uniform for ten *li* together, a fact of which it is impossible not to witness singular instances at every turn. A like diversity is found to prevail in those standards of quantity, upon the absolute invariability of which, so much of the comfort of life in Western lands is found to depend.

The existence of a double standard of any kind, which is often so keen an annoyance to an Occidental, is an equally keen joy to the Chinese. Two kinds of cash, two kinds of weights, two kinds of measures, these seem to him natural and normal, and by no means open to objection. A man who made meat dumplings for sale, was asked how many of these dumplings were

made in a day; to which he replied that they used about "one hundred (Chinese) pounds of flour," the unknown relation between this amount of flour and the number of resultant dumplings being judiciously left to the inquirer to conjecture for himself. In like manner a farmer who is asked the weight of one of his oxen, gives a figure which seems much too low, until he explains that he has omitted to estimate the bones! A servant who was asked his height, mentioned a measure which was ridiculously inadequate to cover his length, and upon being questioned, admitted that he had left out of account all above his shoulders! He had once been a soldier, where the height of the men's clavicle is important in assigning the carrying of burdens. And since a Chinese soldier is to all practical purposes complete without his head, this was omitted. Of a different sort was the measurement of a rustic whom we recently met, and who affirmed that he lived "ninety *li* from the city," but upon cross-examination he consented to an abatement, as this was reckoning both to the city and back, the real distance being as he admitted only "*forty-five li one way!*"

The most conspicuous instance of this variability in China, is seen in the method of reckoning the brass cash, which constitute the only currency of the Empire. The system is everywhere a decimal one, which is the easiest of all systems to be reckoned, but no one is ever sure until he has made particular inquiries, what number of pieces of brass cash are expected in any particular place to pass for a hundred. He will not need to extend his travels over a very large part of the eighteen provinces, to find that this number varies, and varies with a lawlessness that nothing can explain, from the full hundred which is the theoretical "string," to 99, 98, 96, 83 (as in the capital of Shansi), down to 33, as in the eastern part of the province of Chihli, and possibly to a still lower number elsewhere. The same is true, but in a more aggravated degree, of the weight by which silver is sold. No two places have the same "ounce," unless by accident, and each place has a great variety of different ounces, to the extreme bewilderment of the stranger, the certain loss of all except those who deal in silver, and the endless vexation of all honest persons, of whom there are many, even in China. The motive for the perpetuation of this monetary chaos, is

obvious, but we are at present concerned only with the fact of its existence.

The same holds true universally of measures of all sorts. The bushel *(tou)* of one place is not the same as that of any other, and the advantage which is constantly taken of this fact in the exactions connected with the grain tax, would easily cause political disturbances among a less peaceable people than the Chinese. So far is it from being true that "A pint's is a pound, the world around," in China a "pint" is not a pint, nor is a "pound" a pound. Not only does the theoretical basis of each vary, but it is a very common practice (as in the salt monopoly, for example) to fix some purely arbitrary standard, such as twelve ounces, and call that a pound (catty). The purchaser pays for sixteen ounces, and receives but twelve, but then it is openly done and is done by all dealers within the same range, so that there is no fraud, and if the people think of it at all, it is only as an "old time custom" of the salt trade. A similar uncertainty prevails in the measurement of land. In some districts the "acre" is half as large again as in others, and those who happen to live on the boundary of such alterations, are obliged to keep a double set of measuring apparatus, one for each kind of "acre."

It is never safe to repeat any statement (as travellers in China are constantly led to do) in regard to the price of each "catty" of grain or cotton, until one has first informed himself what kind of "catty" they have at that point. The same holds as to the amount of any crop yielded per "acre," statistics of which are not infrequently presented in ignorance of the vital fact that "acre" is not a fixed term. That a like state of things prevails as to the terms employed to measure distance, every traveller in China is ready to testify. It is always necessary in land travel, to ascertain when the distance is given in "miles" *(li)*, whether the "miles" are "large" or not! That there is *some* basis for estimates of distances, we do not deny, but what we do deny is that these estimates or measurements are either accurate or uniform. It is, so far as we know, a universal experience, that the moment one leaves a great imperial highway, the "miles" become "long." If 120 *li* constitute a fair day's journey on the main road, then on country roads, it will take fully as long to go 100 *li*, and in the mountains, the whole day will be spent in getting over 80 *li*.

Besides this, the method of reckoning is frequently based, not on absolute distance, even in a Chinese sense, but on the relative difficulty of getting over the ground. Thus it will be "ninety *li*" to the top of a mountain, the summit of which would not actually measure half that distance from the base, and this number will be stoutly held to, on the ground that it is as much trouble to go this "ninety *li*," as it would be to do that distance on level ground. Another somewhat peculiar fact emerges in regard to linear measurements, namely, that the distance from A to B is not necessarily the same as the distance from B to A! It is vain to cite Euclidian postulates that "quantities which are equal to the same quantity are equal to each other." In China this statement requires to be modified by the insertion of a negative. We could name a section of one of the most important highways in China, which from north to south is 183 *li* in length, while from south to north it is 190 *li*, and singularly enough, this holds true, no matter how often you travel it, and how carefully the tally is kept!*

Akin to this, is another intellectual phenomenon, to wit, that in China it is not true that the "whole is equal to the sum of all its parts." This is especially the case in river travel. On inquiry

* Since this was written, we have met in Mr. Baber's *Travels in Western China* with a confirmation of the view here taken. "We heard, for instance, with incredulous ears, that the distance between two places depended upon which end one started from; and all the informants separately questioned, would give the same differential estimate. Thus from A to B would be unanimously be called one mile, while from B to A would, with equal unanimity, be set down as three. An explanation of this offered by an intelligent native was this: Carriage is paid on a basis of so many cash per mile, it is evident that a coolie ought to be paid at a higher rate if the road is uphill. Now it would be very troublesome to adjust a scale of wages rising with the gradients of the road. It is much more convenient for all parties to assume that the road in difficult or precipitous places is longer. This is what has been done, and these conventional distances are now all that the traveller will succeed in ascertaining. 'But' I protested, 'on the same principle, wet weather must elongate the road, and it must be farther by night than by day.' 'Very true, but a little extra payment adjusts that.' This system may be convenient for the natives, but the traveller finds it a continual annoyance. The scale of distances is something like this: On level ground, one statute mile is called two *li*; on ordinary hill roads, not very steep, one mile is called five *li*; on very steep roads, one mile is called fifteen *li*. The natives of Yünnan, being good mountaineers, have a tendency to underrate the distance on level gound, but there is so little of it in their country, that the future traveller need scarcely trouble himself with the consideration. It will be sufficient to assume five local *li*, except in a very steep places, as being one mile."

you ascertain that it is "forty *li*" to a point ahead. Upon more careful analysis, this "forty" turns out to be composed of two "eighteens," and you are struck dumb with the statement that "four nines are 40, are they not?" In the same manner, "three eighteens" make "sixty," and so on generally. We have heard of a case in which an imperial courier failed to make a certain distance in the limits of time allowed by rule, and it was set up in his defence that the "sixty *li*" were "large." As this was a fair plea, the magistrate ordered the distance measured, when it was found that it was in reality "eighty-three *li*," and it has continued to be so reckoned ever since.

Under these circumstances, it cannot be a matter of surprise to find that the regulation of standards is a thing which each individual understands for himself. The steel-yard maker (if that can be called a "steel-yard" which is turned from wood) perambulates the street, and puts in the little dots (called "stars"), according to the preferences of each customer, who will have not less than two sets of balances, one for buying and one for selling. A ready-made balance, unless it might be an old one, is not to be had, for the whole scale of standards is in a fluid condition, to be solidified only by each successive purchaser.

The same general truth is illustrated by the statements in regard to age, particularity in which is a national trait of the Chinese. While it is easy to ascertain one's age with exactness, by the animal governing the year in which he was born, and to which he therefore "belongs," nothing is more common than to hear the wildest approximation to exactness. An old man is "seventy or eighty years of age," when you know to a certainty that he was seventy only a year ago. The fact is, that in China a person becomes "eighty," the moment he stops being seventy, and this "general average" must be allowed for, if precision is desired. The habit of reckoning by "tens" is deep-seated, and leads to much vagueness. A few people are "ten or twenty," a "few tens" or perhaps "ever to many tens," and a strictly accurate enumeration is one of the rarest of experiences in China. The same vagueness extends upwards to "hundreds," "thousands" and "myriads," the practical limit of Chinese counting. For greater accuracy than these general expressions denote, the Chinese do not care.

Upon their departure for the home land, a gentleman and his wife who had lived for several years in China, were presented by their Chinese friends with two handsome scrolls, intended not for themselves, but for their aged mothers—the only surviving parents—who happened to be of exactly the same age. One of the inscriptions referred to "Happiness, great as the sea," and to "Old age, green as the perpetual pines," with an allusion in smaller characters at the side to the fact that the recipient had attained "seven decades of felicity." The other scroll contained flowery language of a similar character, but the small characters by the side complimented the lady on having enjoyed "six decades of glory." After duly admiring the scrolls, one of the persons whose mother was thus honoured, ventured to inquire of the principal actor in the presentation, why, considering the known parity of ages of the two mothers, one was assigned seventy years, and the other only sixty. The thoroughly characteristic reply was given, that to indite upon each of two such scrolls the identical legend, "seven decades," would look as if the writers were entirely *destitute of originality!*

One of the initial stumbling-blocks of the student of Chinese is to find a satisfactory expression for identity, as distinguished from resemblance. The whole Chinese system of thinking is based on a line of assumptions different from those to which we are accustomed, and they can ill comprehend the mania which seems to possess the Occidental, to ascertain everything with unerring exactness. The Chinese does not know how many families there are in his native village, and he does not wish to know. What any human being can want to know this number for, is to him an insoluble riddle. It is "a few hundreds," "several hundreds," or "not a few," but a fixed and definite number it never was and never will be.

The same lack of precision which characterizes the Chinese use of numbers, is equally conspicuous in their employment of written and even of printed characters. It is not easy to procure a cheap copy of any Chinese book, which does not abound in false characters. Sometimes the character which is employed is more complex than the one which should have been used, showing that the error was not due to a wish to economize work, but it is rather to be credited to the fact that ordinarily accuracy

is considered as of no importance. A like carelessness of notation is met with in far greater abundance, in common letters, a character being often represented by another of the same sound, the mistake being due as much to illiteracy as to carelessness. Indifference to precision is nowhere more flagrantly manifested than in the superscription of epistles. An ordinary Chinese letter is addressed in bold characters, to "My Father Great Man," "Compassionate Mother Great Man," "Ancestral Uncle Great Man," "Virtuous Younger Brother Great Man," etc., etc., generally with no hint as to the *name* of the "Great Man" addressed.

It certainly appears singular that an eminently practical people like the Chinese should be so inexact in regard to their own personal names, as observation indicates them to be. It is very common to find these names written now with one character, and again with another, and either one, we are informed, will answer. The names of villages are not less uncertain, sometimes appearing in two or even three entirely different forms and no one of them is admitted to be more "right" than another. If one should be an acknowledged corruption of another, they may be employed interchangeably, or the correct name may be used in official papers, and the other in ordinary speech, or yet again, the corruption may be used, an adjective forming with the original appellation, a compound title.

The Chinese are unfortunately deficient in the education which comes from a more or less intimate acquaintance with chemical formulæ, where the minutest precision is fatally necessary. The first generation of Chinese chemists will probably lose many of its number, as a result of the process of mixing a "few tens of grains" of something, with "several tens of grains" of something else, the consequence being an unanticipated earthquake. The Chinese are as capable of learning minute accuracy in all things, as any nation ever was—nay more so, for they are endowed with infinite patience—but what we have to remark of this people is, that as at present constituted, they are free from the quality of accuracy, and they do not understand what it is. If this is a true statement of a "true fact," two inferences would seem to be legitimate. First, much allowance must be made for this trait, in our examination of Chinese historical

records. We can readily deceive ourselves, by taking Chinese statements of numbers and of quantities to be what they were never intended to be, exact. Secondly, a wide margin must be left for all varieties of what is dignified with the title of a Chinese "census." The whole is not greater than its parts, Chinese enumeration to the contrary notwithstanding, When we have well considered all the bearings of a Chinese "census," we shall be quite ready to say of it, as was remarked of the United States Supreme Court, by a canny Scotchman who had a strong realization of the "glorious uncertainty of the law," that it has "the last guess at the case!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TALENT FOR MISUNDERSTANDING.

THIS remarkable gift of the Chinese people is first observed when the foreigner knows enough of the language to employ it as a vehicle of thought. To his pained surprise, he finds that he is not understood. He therefore returns to his studies with augmented diligence, and at the end of a series of years, is able to venture with confidence to accost the general public, or any individual thereof, on miscellaneous topics. If the person addressed is a total stranger, especially if he has never before met a foreigner, the speaker will have opportunity for the same pained surprise as when he made his maiden speech in this tongue. The auditor evidently does not understand. He as evidently does not expect to understand. He visibly pays no attention to what is said, makes no effort whatever to follow it, but simply interrupts you to observe, "When you speak, we do not understand." He has a smile of superiority, as of one contemplating the struggles of a deaf mute to utter articulate speech, and as if he would say, "Who supposed that you could be understood? It may be your misfortune and not your fault that you were not born with a Chinese tongue, but you should bear your disabilities, and not worry us with them, for when you speak, we do not understand you." It is impossible to retain at all times an unruffled serenity, in situations like this, and it is natural to turn fiercely on your adversary, and enquire, "Do you understand what I am saying?" "No;" he replies, "I do not understand you!"

Another stage in the experience of Chinese powers of misunderstanding is reached, when although the words are distinctly enough apprehended, through a disregard of details, the thought is obscured, even if not wholly lost. The "foreigner in Far

Cathay" needs to lay in a copious stock of phrases which shall mean, "On this condition," "conditionally," with this understanding," etc., etc. It is true that there do not appear to be any such phrases, nor any occasion for them felt by the Chinese, but with the foreigner it is different. The same is true in regard to the notation of tenses. The Chinese do not care for them, but the foreigner is compelled to care for them.

Of all subjects of human interest in China, the one which most needs to be guarded against misunderstanding, is *money*. If the foreigner is paying out this commodity (which often appears to be the principle function of the foreigner, as seen from the Chinese stand-point) a pluperfect tense is "a military necessity." "When you shall have done your work, you will receive your money." But there is no pluperfect tense in Chinese, or tense of any description. A Chinese simply says, "Do work, get money," the last being the principal idea which dwells in his mind, the "time relation" being absent. Hence when he is to do anything for a foreigner, he wishes his money at once, in order that he may "eat," the presumption being that if he had not stumbled on the job or this foreigner, he should never have eaten any more! Eternal vigilance, we must repeat, is the price at which immunity from misunderstandings about money is to be purchased in China. Who is and who is not to receive it, at what times, in what amounts, whether in silver ingots or brass cash, what quality and weight of the former, what number of the latter shall pass as a "string;" these and other like points, are those in regard to which it is morally impossible to have a too definite and fixed understanding. If the matter be a contract in which a builder, a compradore, or a boatman, is to do on his part certain things, and furnish certain articles, no amount of preliminary precision and exactness in explanations will come amiss.

"Plain at first, afterwards no dispute" is the prudent aphorism of the Chinese. Yet the chances are, that after exhausting one's ingenuity in preliminary agreements, some occasion for misunderstanding will arise. Whether the Chinese concerned happen to be educated scholars, or ignorant coolies, makes little difference. All Chinese are gifted with an instinct for taking advantage of misunderstandings. They find them as a January north wind finds a crack in a door, as the water finds a leak in a ship,

instantly and without apparent effort. The Anglo-Saxon race is in some respects singularly adapted to develope this Chinese gift. As the ancient Persians were taught principally the two arts of drawing the long bow, and speaking the truth, so the Anglo-Saxon is soon perceived by the Chinese to have a talent for veracity and doing justice, as well toward enemies as toward friends. To the Chinese, these qualities must seem as singular as the Jewish habit of suspending all military operations every seventh day, no matter how hard pressed they might be, must have appeared to the Romans under Titus, and the one eccentricity proves as useful to the Chinese as the other did to the Romans.

Foreign intercourse with China for the century proceeding 1860, was one long illustration of the Chinese talent for misunderstanding, and the succeeding years have by no means exhausted that talent. The history of foreign diplomacy with China is largely a history of attempted explanations of matters which have been deliberately misunderstood. But in these or in other cases, the initial conviction that a foreigner will do as he has promised, is deeply rooted in the Chinese mind, and flourishes in spite of whatever isolated exceptions to the rule are forced upon observation. The confidence, too, that a foreigner will act justly (also in spite of some private and many national exemples to the contrary) is equally firm. But given these two fixed points, the Chinese have a fulcrum from which they may hope to move the most obstinate foreigner. "You said thus and thus." "No, I did not say so." "But I understood you to say so. We all understood you to say so. Please excuse our stupidity, and please pay the money, as you say you would." Such is the substance of thousands of arguments between Chinese and foreigners, and in ninety-seven cases out of a hundred, the foreigner pays the money, just as the Chinese knew he would in order to seem strictly truthful as well as strictly just. In the remaining three cases, some other means must be devised to accomplish the result, and of these three, two will succeed.

Examples of the everyday misunderstanding on all subjects will suggest themselves in shoals to the experienced reader, for their name is legion. The coolie is told to pull up the weeds in your yard, but to spare the precious tufts of grass just beginning to sprout, and in which you see visions of a longed-for turf. The

careless buffalo takes a hoe and chops up every green thing he meets, making a wilderness and calling it peace. He did not "understand" you. The cook was sent a long distance to the only available market, with instructions to buy a carp and a young fowl. He returns with no fish, and three tough geese, which were what he thought you ordered. He did not "understand" you. The messenger that was sent just before the closing of the mail with an important packet of letters to the French Consulate, returns with a memorandum in a "chit-book" that the letters could not be received. He has taken them to the Belgian Consulate (perhaps because Belgium is nearer than France), and the mail has closed. He did not "understand" you.

At the time of the formation of one of the Tract Societies in China, it was thought advisable to elect certain Chinese on the Publication Committee, to secure their more hearty co-operation. One of the officers of the society, an accomplished Chinese scholar, explained to one of the newly-elected Chinese teachers, the honour conferred upon the latter by his election to this position, and also the nature and functions of the new society. After a full explanation had been given, and sufficient time had elapsed for the matter to settle into the inner consciousness of the Chinese teacher, he called upon his informant, and asked him if the teacher was correct in his understanding that he was invited to prepare a tract setting forth the advantages of such a society as had been spoken of!

It is often very difficult for an ordinary Chinese mind—as a current American colloquialism apparently derived from the use of horse-cars, phrases it—to "catch on." A foreigner who was spending a short time in the capital, met a drove of camels, among which was a baby camel. Turning to the driver of the cart, who had been for many years in the employ of foreigners, he said, "When you come back to the house, tell my little boy to come out and look at this little camel, as he has never seen one, and it will amuse him very much." After a considerable lapse of time, during which, as in the last case, the idea was undergoing slow fermentation, the carter replied thoughtfully, "If you should *buy* the camel, you could not *raise* it—it would be sure to die!" The writer was once present at a service in Chinese, when the speaker (a missionary) treated the subject of the cure of Naaman.

He pictured the scene as the great Syrian general arrived at the door of Elisha's house, and represented the attendants striving to gain admittance for their master. Struggling to make this as pictorial as possible, the speaker cried out dramatically, on behalf of the Syrian servants, "Gatekeeper, open the door; the Syrian general has come!" To the speaker's surprise, a man in the rear seat disappeared at this point, as if he had been shot out, and it subsequently appeared that having failed to "catch on," this person had laboured under a misunderstanding. He was the gatekeeper of the premises, and oblivious of what had gone before, on hearing himself suddenly accosted, he had rushed out with commendable promptness, to let in Naaman!

Not less erroneous were the impressions of another auditor of a missionary in one of the central provinces, who wished to produce a profound impression upon his audience by showing with the steropticon, a highly magnified representation of a very common parasite. As the gigantic body of this reptile, much resembling an Egyptian crocodile, was thrown athwart the canvass, one of the spectators present was heard to announce in an awed whisper the newly gained idea, "See, this is the great Foreign Louse!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TALENT FOR INDIRECTION.

One of the intellectual habits upon which we Anglo-Saxons pride ourselves most, is that of going directly to the marrow of a subject, and when we have reached it, saying exactly what we mean. Considerable abatements must no doubt be made in any claim set up for such a habit, when we consider the usages of polite society and those of diplomacy, yet it still remains substantially true that the instinct of rectilinearity is the governing one, albeit considerably modified by special circumstances. No very long acquaintance is required with any Asiatic race, however, to satisfy us, that their instincts and ours are by no means the same—in fact that they are at opposite poles. We shall lay no stress upon the redundancy of honorific terms in all Asiatic languages with which we happen to be acquainted, some of which in this respect, are indefinitely more elaborate than the Chinese. Neither do we emphasize the use of circumlocutions, periphrases, and what may be termed aliases, to express ideas which are perfectly simple, but which no one wishes to express with simplicity. Thus a great variety of terms may be used in Chinese to indicate that a person has died, and not one of the expressions is guilty of the brutality of saying so; nor does the periphrasis depend for its use upon the question whether the person to whom reference is made is an Emperor or a coolie, however widely the terms employed may differ in the two cases. Nor are we at present concerned, except in a very general way, with the quality of veracity of language. When everyone agrees to use words in a "Pickwickian sense," and everyone understands that everyone else is doing so, the questions resulting are not those of veracity, but of method.

No extended experience of the Chinese is required to enable a foreigner to arrive at the conclusion that it is impossible from

merely hearing what a Chinese says, to tell what he means. This continues to be true, no matter how proficient one may have become in the colloquial—so that he perhaps understands every phrase, and might possibly, if worst can do worst, write down every character which he has heard in a given sentence; and yet he might be unable to decide exactly what the speaker had in mind. The reason of this must of course be that the speaker did not express what he had in mind, but something else more or less cognate to it, from which he wished his meaning or a part of it to be inferred.

Next to a competent knowledge of the Chinese language, large powers of inference are essential to anyone who is to deal successfully with the Chinese, and whatever his powers in this direction may be, in many instances he will still go astray, because these powers were not equal to what was required of them. In illustration of this all-pervading phenomenon of Chinese life, let us again take as an illustration a case often occurring among those who are the earliest and often by no means the least important representatives to us of the whole nation—our servants. One morning the "Boy" puts in an appearance with his usual expressionless visage, merely to mention that one of his "aunts" is ailing, and that he shall be obliged to forego the privilege of doing our work for a few days while he is absent prosecuting his inquiries as to her condition. Now it does not with certainty follow from such a request as this, that the "Boy" has no aunt, that she is not sick, and that he has not some more or less remote idea of going to see about her, but it is, to put it mildly, much more probable that the "Boy" and the cook have had some misunderstanding, and that as the prestige of the latter happened in this case to be the greater of the two, his rival takes this oblique method of intimating that he recognizes the facts of the case, and retires to give place to another.

The individual who has done you a favour, for which it was impossible to arrange at the time a money payment, politely but firmly declines the gratuity which you think it right to send him in token of your obligation. What he says is that it would violate all the Five Constant Virtues for him to accept anything of you for such an insignificant service, and that you wrong him by offering it, and would disgrace him by insisting on his

acceptance of it. What does this mean? It means that his hopes of what you would give him were blighted by the smallness of the amount, and that like Oliver Twist, he "wants more." And yet it may not mean this after all, but may be an intimation that there is something else which happens at the time to be more serviceable to him than your money, and which he must give up hoping for if he takes the money. Or it is possible, that the real meaning is, that though the money is desirable, there is a probability that you will at some future time have it in your power to give him something which will be even more desirable, to the acquisition of which the present payment would be a bar, so that he prefers to leave it an open question, till such time as his own best move is obvious.

If the Chinese are thus guarded when they speak of their interest, it follows from the universal dread of giving offence, that they will be more cautious about speaking of others, when there is a possibility of trouble arising in consequence. Fond as they are of gossip and all kinds of small talk, the Chinese distinguish with a ready intuition cases in which it will not do to be too communicative, and under these circumstances, especially where foreigners are concerned, they are the grave of whatever they happen to know. In multitudes of instances the stolid looking people by whom we are surrounded could give us "points," the possession of which would cause a considerable change in our conduct toward others. But unless they clearly see in what way they are to be benefitted by the result, and protected against the risks, the instinct of reticence will prevail, and our friends will maintain an agnostic silence.

Nothing is more amusing than to watch the demeanour of a Chinese who has made up his mind that it is best for him to give an intimation of something unfavorable to some one else. Things must have gone very far indeed, when even under these conditions, the communication is made in plain and unmistakable terms. What is far more likely to occur is the indirect suggestion by oblique and devious routes, of a something which cannot, which *must* not be told. Our informant glances uneasily about, as though he feared a spy in ambush. He lowers his voice to a mysterious whisper. He holds up three fingers of one hand, to shadow dimly forth the notion that the person about whom he

is not speaking, but gesturing, is the third in the family. He makes vague introductory remarks, leading up to a revelation of apparent importance, and just as he gets to the climax of the case, he suddenly stops short, suppresses the predicate upon which everything depends, nods significantly, as much as to say, "*Now* you see it, do you not?" when all the while, the poor unenlightened foreigner has seen nothing, except that there is nothing whatever to see. Nor will it be strange, if after working things up to this pitch, your "informant" (falsely so called) leaves you as much in the dark as he found you, intimating that at some other time, you will preceive that he is right!

It is a trait which the Chinese share with the rest of the race, to wish to keep back bad news as long as possible, and to communicate it in a disguised shape. But "good form" among Chinese requires this deception to be carried to an extent which certainly seems to us at once surprising and futile. We have known a fond grandmother having come unexpected upon the whispered consultation of a couple of friends, who had arrived expressly to break to her the news of the sad death of a grandchild away from home, to be assured with the emphasis of iteration, that they were only discussing a bit of gossip, though within half an hour, the whole truth came out. We have known a son returning to his home after an absence of several months, advised by a friend in the last village at which he called before reaching his home, *not* to stay and see a theatrical exhibition, from which he inferred, and rightly, that his mother was dead! We once had a Chinese letter entrusted to us for transmission to a person at a great distance from home, the contents of the missive being to the effect, that during his absence, the man's wife had died suddenly, and that the neighbours finding that no one was at hand to prevent it, had helped themselves to every article in the house, which was literally left unto him desolate. Yet on the exterior of this epistle were inscribed in huge characters the not too accurate words, "A peaceful family letter!"

No better illustration of this subject could be adduced than the oblique terms in which references are made both by members of her family and others, to married women. Such a woman literally has no name, but only two surnames, her husband's and that of her mother's family. She is spoken of as "the mother of

so-and-so." Thus a Chinese, with whom you are acquainted, talks of the illness of "the Little Black One his mother" *(Hei-hsiao-t'a-niang)*. Perhaps you never heard in any way that he had a "Little Black One" in his household, but he takes it for granted that you must know it. If, however, there are no children, then the matter is more embarrassing. Perhaps the woman is called the "Aunt" of a "Little Black One," or by some other periphrasis. Elderly married women have no hesitation in speaking of their "Outside" *(Wai-t'ou)*, meaning the one who has the care of things out of the house, but a young married woman not blessed with children, is sometimes put to hard straits in the attempt to refer to her husband, without intimating the connection in words. Sometimes she calls him her "Teacher," and in one case of which we have heard she was driven to the desperate expedient of dubbing her husband by the name of his business, "Oilmill says thus and so!"

Mr. Giles mentions a celebrated Chinese general, who on his way to the war, bowed low to some frogs in a marsh which he passed, wishing his soldiers to understand that valour like that of these reptiles is admirable. To an average Occidental, it might appear that this general demanded of his troop somewhat "large powers of inference," but not greater, perhaps, than will be called for by the foreigner whose lot is cast in China. About the time of a recent Chinese New-Year, when the annual debt paying season had arrived, an acquaintance, upon meeting the writer, made certain gestures which seemed to have a deep significance. He pointed his finger at the sky, then at the ground, then at the person whom he was addressing, and last at himself, all without speaking a word. There was certainly no excuse for misapprehending this proposition, though we are ashamed to say that we failed to take it in at its full value. He thought that there would be no difficulty in one's inferring from his pantomime that *he wished to borrow a little money, and that he wished to do it so secretly that only "Heaven," "Earth," "You" and "I" would know!*

It is an example of the Chinese talent for indirection, that owing to their complex ceremonial code, one is able to show great disrespect for another, by methods which to us seem preposterously oblique. The manner of folding a letter, for example, may embody a studied affront. The omission to raise a Chinese

character above the line of other characters, may be a greater indignity than it would be in English to spell the name of a person without capital letters. In social intercourse, rudeness may be offered, without the utterance of a word to which exception could be taken, as by *not* meeting an entering guest, at the proper point, or by neglecting to escort him the distance suited to his condition. The omission by anyone of a multitude of simple acts may convey a thinly disguised insult, instantly recognized as such by a Chinese, though the poor untutored foreigner has been thus victimized times without number, and never even knew that he had not been treated with distinguished respect! All Chinese, as already remarked, revile one another when angry, but those whose literary talents are adequate to the task, delight to convey an abusive meaning by such delicate innuendo, that the real meaning may for the time quite escape observation, requiring to be digested, like the nauseous core of a sugar-coated pill. Thus, the phrase *tung-hsi*—literally "east-west"—means a thing, and to call a person "a thing," is abusive. But the same idea is conveyed by indirection, by saying that one is *not* "north-south," which implies that he *is* "east-west," that is "a thing!"

Everyone must have been struck by the wonderful fertility of even the most illiterate Chinese in the impromptu invention of plausible excuses, each one of which is in warp and woof fictitious. No one but a foreigner ever thinks of taking them seriously, or as any other than suitable devices by which to keep one's "face." And even the too critical foreigner, requires no common ability, to pursue now in air, now in water and now in the mud, those to whom most rigid economy of the truth has become a fixed habit. And when driven to close quarters, the most ignorant Chinese has one firm and sure defence which never fails, he can fall back on his ignorance, in full assurance of escape. He "did not know," he "did not understand," twin propositions, which, like charity "cover a multitude of sins."

No better and more fruitful illustration of our theme could be found, than that exhibited in the daily issues or the *Peking Gazette.* Nowhere is the habit of what in classical language is styled "pointing at a deer and calling it a horse," carried to a higher pitch, and conducted on a more generous scale. Nowhere is it more true, even in China, that "things are not

what they seem," than in this marvellous lens, which semi-opaque though it be, lets in more light on the real nature of the Chinese government, than all other windows combined. If it is a general truth that a Chinese would be more likely than not to give some other than the real reason for anything, and that nothing requires more skill than to guess what is meant by what is said, this nowhere finds more perfect exemplification than in Chinese official life, where formality and artificiality are at their maximum. When a whole column of the "leading journal" of China is taken up with a description of the various aches and pains of some aged mandarin, who hungers and thirsts to retire from His Majesty's service, what does it all mean? When his urgent prayer to be relieved is refused, and he is told to go back to his post at once, what does that mean? What do the long memorials, reporting as to matters of fact, really connote? When a high official accused of some flagrant crime is ascertained—as per memorial printed—to be innocent, but guilty of something else three shades less blame worthy, does it mean that the writer of the memorial was not "got at" to a sufficient extent, or has the official in question really done those particular things? Who can decide?

Firmly are we persuaded that the individual who can peruse a copy of the *Peking Gazette*, and while reading each document can form an approximately correct notion as to what is really behind it, knows more of China than can be learned from all the works on this Empire that ever were written. But is there not reason to fear, that by the time any outside barbarian shall have reached such a pitch of comprehension of China as this implies, that we shall be as much at a loss to know what *he* meant by what *he* said, as if he were really Chinese?

CHAPTER XX.

FLEXIBLE INFLEXIBILITY.

It has been already remarked that the first knowledge which we acquire of the Chinese is derived from our servants. Unconsciously to themselves, and not always to our satisfaction, they are our earliest teachers in the native character, meaning by that phrase not ideographs but disposition, and the lessons thus learned we often find it hard to forget. But in proportion as our experience of the Chinese becomes broad, we discover that the conclusions to which we had been insensibly impelled by our dealings with a very narrow circle of servants, are strikingly confirmed by our wider knowledge, for there is a sense in which every Chinese may be said to be an epitome of the whole race. The particular characteristic with which we have now to deal, although not altogether satisfactorily described by the paradoxical title which seems to comes nearest to an adequate expression, can easily be made intelligible by very slight description.

Of all the servants employed in a foreign establishment in China, there is no one who so entirely holds the peace of the household in the hollow of his hands, as the cook. His aspect is the personification of deference, as he is told by his new mistress what are the methods which she wishes him to employ, and what methods she most emphatically does *not* wish employed. To all that is laid down as the rule of the establishment, he assents with a cordiality which is prepossessing, not to say winning. He is, for example, expressly warned that the late cook had a disagreeable habit of putting the bread into the oven, before it was suitably raised, and that as this is one of the details on which a mistress feels bound to insist, he and his mistress parted. To this the candidate responds cheerfully, showing that whatever his other faults may be, obstinacy does not seem to be

one of them. He is told that dogs, loafers and smoking will not be tolerated in the kitchen, to which he replies that he hates dogs, has never learned to smoke, and being a comparative stranger has but few friends in the city, and none of them are loafers. After these preliminaries, his duties begin, and it is but a few days, before it is discovered that this cook is a species of "blood brother" of the last one, in the item of imperfectly risen bread, that there is an unaccountable number of persons coming to and departing from the kitchen, many of them accompanied by dogs, and that a not very faint odour of stale tobacco is one of the permanent assets of the establishment. The cook cordially admits that the bread is not quite equal to his best, but that it is *not* due to imperfect kneading. He is particular on that point. The strangers seen in the kitchen are certain "yard brothers" of the coolie, but none of them had dogs, and they are all gone now and will not return—though they are seen again next day. Not one of the servants ever smokes, and the odour must have come over the wall from the establishment of a man in the Customs, whose servants are dreadful smokers. The cook is the personification of reasonableness, but as there is nothing to change, he does not know how to change it.

The same state of things holds with the coolie, who is set to cut the grass with a foreign sickle, bright and sharp. He receives it with a smile of approval, and is seen later in the day doing the work with a Chinese reaping machine, which is a bit of old iron about four inches in length, fitted to a short handle. "The old," he seems to say, "is better." The washerman is provided with a foreign washing machine, which economises time, soap, labour, and, most of all, the clothing to be washed. He is furnished with a patent wringer, which requires no strength, and does not damage the fabrics. The washing machine and the wringer are alike suffered to relapse into "innocuous desuetude," and the washerman continues to scrub and wrench the garments into holes and shreds, as in former days.

Eternal vigilance is the price at which innovations of this nature are to be defended. The gardener is told to repair a decayed wall by using some adobe bricks which are already on hand, but he thinks it better to use the branches of trees buried a food deep in the top of the wall, and accordingly does

so, explaining, if he is questioned, the superiority of his method. The messenger who is employed to take an important mail to a place several days' journey distant, receives his packages late in the evening, that he may start the next morning by daylight. The next afternoon he is seen in a neighbouring alley, and on being sent for and asked what he means, he informs us that he was obliged to take a day and wash his stockings! It is the same experience with the carter whom you have hired by the day. He is told to go a particular route, to which, like all others in the cases supposed, he assents, and takes you by an entirely different one, because he has heard from some passing stranger, that the other was not so good. Cooks, coolies, gardeners, carters,—all agree in distrusting *our* judgment, and in placing supreme reliance upon their own.

The same set of phenomena are constantly observed wherever there is a foreign dispensary and hospital. The patient is examined carefully, and prescribed for, receives his medicine in a specified number of doses, with directions thrice repeated to avoid mistakes, as to the manner and times at which it is to be taken. Lest he should forget the details, he returns once or twice to make sure, goes home and swallows the doses for two days at a gulp, because the excellence of the cure *must* be in the direct ratio of the dose. The most minute and emphatic cautions against disturbing a plaster jacket are not sufficient to prevent its summary removal, because the patient does not wish to become a "turtle," and have a hard shell grow to his skin. It is not a very comforting reflection, but it is one which seems to be abundantly justified by observation, that the opinion of the most ignorant assistant in a dispensary seems (and therefore is) to the average patient, as valuable as that of the physician in charge, though the former may not be able to read a character, does not know the name of a drug, nor the symptoms of any disease, and though the latter may have been decorated with all the letters in the alphabet of medical titles, and have had a generation of experience. Yet a hint from the gatekeeper or the coolie may be sufficient to secure the complete disregard of the directions of the physician, and the adoption of something certainly foolish, and possible fatal.

Thus far, we have spoken of instances of inflexibility in which foreigners are concerned, for those are the ones to which our

attention is soonest drawn, and which possess for us the most practical interest. But the more our observation is directed to the relations of the Chinese to each other, through which if anywhere, their true dispositions are to be manifested, the more we perceive that the state of things indicated by the expressive Chinese phrase, "outwardly is, inwardly is not" *(yang-shih-yin-fei)* is not exceptional. Chinese servants are yielding and complaisant to Chinese masters, as Chinese servants are to foreign masters, but they have no idea of not doing things in their own way, and it is not unlikely that their masters never for a moment suppose that their orders will be literally obeyed. A foreign employer requires his employés to do exactly as they are told, and because they do not do so, he is in a state of chronic hostility to some of them. A friend of the writer, who had in his employ one of that numerous class of servants who combine extreme faithfulness with extreme mulishness—thus making themselves an indispensably necessary nuisance—happily expressed a dilemma into which the masters of such servants are often brought, when he remarked that as regarded that particular "boy" he was in a condition of chronic indecision, whether to kill him, or to raise his wages! The Chinese master knows perfectly well that his commands will be ignored in various ways, but he anticipates this inevitable result, as one might set aside a reserve for bad debts, or allow a margin for friction in mechanics.

The same greater or less disregard of orders appears to prevail through all the various ranks of Chinese officials, in their relations to one another, up to the very topmost round. There are several motives either of which may lead to the contravening of instructions, such as personal indolence, a wish to oblige friends, or, most potent of all, the magnetic influence of cash. A district magistrate who lived in a place where the water is brackish, ordered his servant to take a water-cart, and draw water from a river several miles distant. The servant did nothing of the kind, but merely went to a village where he knew the water to be sweet, and provided the magistrate with as much as he wanted of this fluid, to the saving of two thirds the distance, and to the entire satisfaction of all parties. If the magistrate had known to a certainty that he was disobeyed, it is not probable that he would have uttered a whisper on the subject so long

as the water was good. In China, "The cat that catches the rat, is the good cat." Nothing succeds like success. The dread of giving offence, and the innate Chinese instinct of avoiding a disturbance would prevent misdemeanours of disobedience from being reported, though five hundred people might be in the secret. That was a typical Chinese servant who having been told to empty the water from a cistern into something which would save it for future use, was found to have poured it all into a well! Thus he contrived to preserve the shell of conformity, with the most absolute negation of any practical result.

It is easy to see how such a policy of evasion may come into collision with the demands of justice. The magistrate sentences a criminal to wear a heavy wooden collar for a period of two months, except at night when it is to be removed. By the judicious expenditure of cash, "where it will do the most good," this order is only so far carried out, as that the criminal is decorated with the cangue at such times as the magistrate is making his entrance to and his exit from the yamên. At all other times the criminal is quite free from the obnoxious burden. Does the magistrate not suspect that his sentence will be defeated by bribery, and will he slip out the back way in order to come upon the explicit proof of disobedience? By no means. The magistrate is himself a Chinese, and he knew when the sentence was fixed, that it would not be regarded, and with this in mind he made the term twice as long as it might otherwise have been. This seems to be a sample of the intricacies of official intercourse in all departments, as exemplified by what foreigners continually observe. The higher officer orders the lower to see that a certain step is taken. The lower official reports respectfully that it has been done. Meanwhile nothing has been done at all. In many cases this is the end of the matter. But if there is a continued pressure from some quarter, and the orders are urgent, the lower magistrate transmits the pressure to those still lower, and throws the blame upon them, until the *momentum* of the pressure is exhausted, and then things go on just as they were before. This is called "reform," and is often seen on a great scale, as in the spasmodic suppression of the sale of opium, or of the cultivation of the poppy, with results which are known to all.

There are doubtless those to whom the Chinese seem the most "obstinate" of peoples, and to such the adjective "flexible" which we have employed to characterize the "inflexibility" of the Chinese, will appear singularly inappropriate. Nevertheless, we must express the conviction that the Chinese are far from being the most obstinate of peoples, and that they are in fact far less obstinate than the Anglo-Saxons. We call them "flexible," because with a "firmness" like that of mules, they unite a capacity of bending, of which the Anglo-Saxon is frequently destitute. A certain district magistrate proved very obstructive to the treaty rights of foreigners within his jurisdiction, and was reported to the Taotai of the circuit, and through him to His Excellency Li Hung-chang, who promptly ordered the local magistrate to correct his error, which he did with graceful easy, merely remarking good humouredly to the foreigner who had made him so much trouble, "So you prosecuted me before the Governor-General, did you?" as one who had lost a game of chess might remark, "I should have won, if you had not contrived to queen a pawn."

No better illustration of this talent of the Chinese for "flexibility," can be cited, than their ability to receive *gracefully* a reproof. Among the Anglo-Saxon race it is a lost art, or rather it is an art that was never discovered. But the Chinese listens patiently, attentively, even cordially while you are exposing to him his own shortcomings, assents cheerfully, and adds "I am in fault, I am in fault." Perhaps he even thanks you for your kindness to his unworthy self, and promises that the particulars which you have specified shall be immediately, thoroughly, premanently reformed. These fair promises you well know to be "flowers in the mirror, and the bright moon in the water," but despite their insubstantial nature, it is impossible not to be mollified therewith, and this, be it noted, is the object for which they were designed.

Few comparisons of the sort hit the mark more exactly than that which likens the Chinese to be bamboo. It is graceful, it is everywhere useful, it is supple and it is hollow. When the east wind blows, it bends to the west. When no wind blows, it does not bend at all. The bamboo plant is a grass. It is easy to tie knots in grasses. It is difficult, despite its suppleness, to tie knots in the bamboo plant. Nothing in nature is more flexible than a human hair. It can be drawn out a large percentage of its own

length, and when the tractile force is withdrawn, it at once contracts. It bends in any direction by its own weight alone. There is a certain growth of hair on many human heads, which consists of definite tufts, quite persistent in their direction of its growth, and generally incapable of any modification. Such a growth is vulgarly called a "cow-lick," and as it cannot be controlled, the remaining hairs, however numerous they may be, must be arranged with reference thereto. If the planet on which we dwell be considered as a head, and the several nations, as the hair, the Chinese race is a venerable cow-lick, capable of being combed, clipped, and possibly shaved, but which is certain to grow again just as before, and the general direction of which is not likely to be changed.

CHAPTER XXI.

PARASITISM.

THE English word "parasite" is derived from a classical term signifying to get one's living at the expense of another, and this word and its derivatives have found their way into the languages of modern Europe, to denote a social fact which has no limit of time or of place. Wherever there are rich and poor, the great and the humble, those in power and those not in power, there will be developed to a greater or to a lesser extent, a state of parasitism. But in the social conditions of China, the circumstances which lead some to attach themselves to others as dependants are numerous, and the temptations to do so are strong, while at the same time the checks to such a system which are found in Western lands, are in China almost entirely wanting. Attention has been repeatedly directed to the solidarity of Chinese social life, and the key to many of its characteristics. It is in social solidarity that Chinese parasitism has its strongest root and its most conspicuous illustrations.

A Chinese family, let us not forget, does not consist as in our thought a "family" does, of a man, his wife and their children. In China a "family" denotes a multitude of persons of the same surname and descended from the same ancestors. Political convulsions may have led to a break in the connection between the present and the past, but after every such interruption the family begins again its processes of expansion, accumulation, and ramification. Let us suppose the case of a family, using the term for the moment in the more restricted sense, having five sons, and three daughters. The father has several brothers and sisters, and the mother likewise has her brothers and her sisters. The eight children grow up, and at an early period marriages are arranged for them all, the five young men bringing their five little brides into the "yard," in which quarters must have been provided for their expansion. A foreign census-taker would now report six

"families" instead of one, but the foreign census-taker would be wrong. It is very likely that the whole of this compound family will continue as before to "have all things common," and even if they have divided their land so that each married couple cultivates its own portion, they still constitute one "family," and are so regarded by others.

By the marriage of the eight children, the "family" is brought into intimate relations with eight other "families," each of which in turn has its own circle of connections and relationships, and each one of these relationships bears a more or less important part in the affairs of the original "family" which is our point of departure. If the star of any one of these numerous families wanes, this circumstance cannot fail to affect every family with which it is connected by marriage. If any one of these related familes grows rich, the pulsations of this newly acquired wealth will necessarily be felt to the outermost circle of relationship, whether of blood or of marriage. In the course of a few years, the eight children will be surrounded by a vigorous crop of little ones, and thus a whole army of grand-children comes into the rapidly widening circle, and a little later each of these children will be a problem both as to its own support and as to openings into some means of helping to support the "family." Those parents who are well off will have no difficulty in settling this problem easily and satisfactorily, but out of such a large circle as we have now brought into view, the proportion of those who will be independent of outside help will be small. And if help is required, of whom should it be sought, if not from those in the wide circle of relatives and connections, who are best able to give it?

That instinct of independence, which leads a young man of the Anglo-Saxon race to scorn the help of his rich relatives and which nerves his arm, and steadies his brain, while he fights his own way in the battle of life, to a Chinese is entirely inconceivable. In the case of the Saxon, it is partly a matter of heredity, but it is due to heredity compassed with a suitable environment. England is a young country when compared with China, but it is becoming more and more difficult each decade for a young man in England, unaided by friends or influence of any kind, to make his own way. Doubtless it can be done, and will be done for centuries yet to

come, though under increasing embarrassments. But England has a splendid array of Colonies, and there is the Indian Empire, into which so much of the best blood of the British Isles has flowed for much more than a century. There are the Army and the Navy which receive so much of the restless ambition of British youth.

None of these avenues, nor any others at all resembling them, are open to a Chinese lad, nor if they were all open, has he the instincts which would enable him to take advantage of them, nor if he had, would be able to do so, while Chinese society is constituted as it is, that is, while the Chinese continue to be Chinese. The English boy who runs away, goes to sea, travels all over the world, learns more or less of everything that is bad, comes back like Robinson Crusoe, after twenty years of absence, with a harvest of experience and sacks of Spanish doubloons. The Chinese boy who runs away, steers with precision toward some spot, where there is some relative, townsman, or acquaintance, on whom he can fasten himself, until they find him something to do. In nine cases out of ten the family know with reasonable certainty where they can find their runaway son, by considering in what accessible places he has uncles, cousins, or friends.

It is this universal trait of parasitism, to which we are indebted for much of the difficulty of introducing Western inventions into China. The shrewd Chinese, thoroughly aware of the valuable practical results which must ensue upon the adoption of certain foreign innovations, dread, and with good reason, to see an army of foreigners summoned to introduce the new inventions, fattening themselves upon the hard-earned wealth of the Celestial Empire. Rather than submit to this, they resolve to introduce only such innovations as are absolute necessities, and these only by degrees, entrusting the administration of the new enterprise to such competent Chinese management as is to be had. As the Chinese are an eminently practical people, there is no lack of administrative talent, but there is no man in China, no matter what his administrative or other talents, who is not surrounded by a *cordon* of needy relatives, whom he could not shake off if he would. Nepotism and parasitism are the normal concomitants of the career of every public man in China, but however much a matter of course it may seem to the Chinese that this should

be so in official life, yet when the same principles are found to be applied as well to the management of steamship companies, and mines, the results are not gratifying to stock-holders, nor favourable to the march in the Chinese Empire of what we call "foreign ideas."

It would naturally be supposed that the official lists of Manchus entitled to draw government allowances would be guarded with the utmost care, but experience shows that in the keen struggle for existence, the clever Chinese is very much more than a match for the race by which he has been ostensibly conquered. A memorial from the Director of the Court of Revision, published in the *Peking Gazette*, during the year 1883, laid before His Majesty proposals for the rectification of the "four chief abuses" in the organization of the bannermen, and incidentally furnishes a most excellent illustration of our subject. "The entrance of Chinese into the banners," he says, "must be stopped. The registers of bannermen drawn up at the end of each year are meant to check false entries and the undue consumption of rations. *At the present time half the bannermen are Chinese, ignorant of their supposed parentage, and of Manchu.* This has been brought about by the Chinese underlings, who make up the register, introducing their sons as the sons or grandsons of widows. Afterward they purchase office, and enter the examinations, just as if they were bannermen. There are some cases of Chinese clerks whose sons are soldiers of the banners. Unless investigation is made, endless abuses will arise." It is significant that nothing is said about purging the lists of the fraudulent names already enrolled.

The whole official system of China is but an extended and complicated example of parasitism. Officers who are employed by the government are paid but a trifle for their services, which are often of a very arduous and thankless nature. Whatever they receive above this meagre allowance must be secured by a more or less gentle pressure on each side, a pressure to which foreigners have agreed to give the name of "squeezes." This pressure, in the shape of exactions, is transmitted from above, downwards, like the impulse to motion through the wheels and cogs of a machine, until each part is set in motion, subject to its own pressure and its own friction, and in each case, the friction is an

unavoidable constituent of the working of the machine. In the allegorical language of the Chinese aphorism "The large fish eat the little fish, the little fish eat the insects, and the insects eat the water-plants and the mud." This system is by no means confined to China, for it was described by Swift one hundred and fifty years ago in his well-known lines:

"So naturalists observe, a flea.
Has smaller fleas that on him prey;
And these have smaller still to bite 'em;
And so proceed *ad infinitum*."

If Chinese officials are compelled by the terms of their existence to be parasites, the same is true to a still greater degree of the horde of followers who attach themselves to every person in office, and without whom he could not move a step. Indispensable as these assistants are to the conduct of the public business of the Empire, multitudes of them systematically, not only receive no salary, but often pay handsome fees for the privilege of holding their positions. How they reimburse themselves, with compound interest, can be ascertained by interviewing any Chinese who has become entangled in a lawsuit, and by obtaining from him a detailed statement of the persons to whom, and subjects for which he paid the "squeezes" to which he has been subjected at every stage of the proceedings. But even if by rare prudence and good fortune, a Chinese were to escape from all legal proceedings during the entire term of his natural life, the parasites would be sure to find him out at irregular intervals, and levy exactions upon him for so-called public business, such as providing carts, animals, boats, materials for repairing river banks, and a multitude of similar objects. These "squeezes," like others, are more or less systematized, and come to be taken as matters of course.

The system of parasitism is a constituent part of the educational routine of the Chinese. The relation between teacher and pupil is far more intimate than any with which we are acquainted, and a person who has once been a preceptor of another, has a kind of presumptive claim upon him as long as he lives. When the teacher is poor and in distress, as happens to a large percentage of Chinese teachers, he may get his entire living by roaming about and levying small contributions on his former pupils. If this is insufficient, as it is not unlikely to be, a poor teacher becomes

a "Roving Scholar," like some of the monks in the Middle Ages, and receives a trifle in alms at every school-house at which he stops. The circumstance that two persons have studied together under the same teacher, or have been examined at the same time for a degree, constitutes a claim upon which aid in distress is continually based. Indeed to such a pitch of perfection is parasitism carried, that there are everywhere clever vagrants roaming about picking up acquaintances, insinuating themselves into the affairs of others, learning where their relatives live, and who they are, in order to hunt up such of them as seem to be worth the trouble, and by representing themselves as friends of their friends, gain a little advantage in the shape of a meal or a lodging, or both.

The whole body of Buddhist and Taoist priests in China is an organized army of parasites. Their stock in trade is the irrepressible human instinct of worship, and by means of this alone, they are able to persuade the shrewd and practical Chinese to support the priests in such ease and comparative luxury as but a small proportion of the population are able to attain. In addition to receiving the income from the land which is given to the temples, after the wheat and autumn harvests, the priests go about levying their tax on every family in the village, a tax consisting of a greater or less contribution in grain, the refusal of which would certainly lead to dramatic consequences. Besides this, each priest is well paid in food and in money for his services at the temples on special days, or at funerals. Taking into consideration the industry and the economy of the Chinese people, and contrasting these characteristics with the phenomena exhibited in the lives of the priest, it is not strange that a poet has said "The sun is high on the mountain monastery, but the priest is not yet up; from this we see that fame and gain are not equal to indolence."

The last example of social parasitism in China which we have to mention, is the class of beggars diffused with a fearful impartiality all over the Empire. They are the superficial evidence of the existence in Chinese society of a deep-seated disease. By what means the pauperism of China can be mitigated and in time abolished, cannot now be discussed, but it is a problem well worth the attention of any philanthropist and of any statesman.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ABSENCE OF NERVES.

It is a very significant aspect of modern civilization, which is expressed in the different uses of the word "nervous." Its original meaning is "possessing nerve; sinewy; strong; vigorous." One of its derivative meanings, and the one which we by far most frequently meet, is "Having the nerves weak or diseased; subject to, or suffering from undue excitement of the nerves; easily excited; weakly." The varied and complex phraseology by which the peculiar phases of nervous diseases are expressed has become by this time familiar in our ears as household words. There is no doubt, that civilization, as exhibited in its modern form, tends to undue nervous excitement, and that nervous diseases are relatively more common than they were a century ago.

But what we have now to say does not concern those who are specially subject to nervous diseases, but to the general mass of Occidentals, who, while not in any specific condition of ill-health, are yet continually reminded, in a great variety of ways, that their nervous systems are a most conspicuous part of their organization. We allude, in short to people, who are "nervous," and we understand this term to include *all* our readers, and in general all the people who live in the lands from which we have come. To the Anglo-Saxon race, at least, it seems a matter of course, that those who live in an age of steam, and of electricity, must necessarily be in a different condition as to their nerves, from those who lived in the old slow days of sailing packets, and of mail-coaches. Ours is an age of extreme activity. It is an age of rush. There is no leisure, so much as to eat, and the nerves are kept in a state of constant tension, with results which are sufficiently well-known.

Business men in our time have an eager restless air (at least those who do their business in Occidental lands), as if they were in momentary expectation of a telegram—as they often are—the contents of which may affect their destiny in some fateful way. We betray this unconscious state of mind in a multitude of acts. We cannot sit still, but we must fidget. We finger our pencils, while we are talking, as if we ought at this particular instant, to be rapidly inditing something, ere it be forever too late. We rub our hands together, as if preparing for some serious task, which is about to absorb all our energies. We twirl our thumbs, we turn our heads with the swift motion of the wild animal which seems to fear that something dangerous may have been left unseen. We have a sense that there is something which we ought to be doing now, and into which we shall proceed at once to plunge, as soon as we shall have dispatched six other affairs of even more pressing importance. The effect of overworking our nerves shows itself, not mainly in such affections as "fiddler's cramp," "telegrapher's cramp," "writer's cramp," and the like, but in a general tension. We do not sleep as we once did, either as regards length of time, or soundness of rest. We are wakened by slight causes, and often by those which are exasperatingly trivial, such as the twitter of a bird on a tree, a chance ray of light straggling into our darkened rooms, the motion of a shutter in the breeze, the sound of a voice, and when sleep is once interrupted, it is banished. We have taken our daily life to rest with us, and the result is that we have no real rest. In an age when it has become a kind of aphorism, that a bank never succeeds until it has a president who takes it to bed with him, it is easy to understand, that while the shareholders reap the advantage, it is bad for the president.

We have mentioned thus fully these familiar facts of our every day Western life, to point the great contrast to them, which one cannot help seeing, and feeling too, when he begins to become acquainted with the Chinese. It is not very common to dissect dead Chinamen, though it has doubtless been done, but we do not hear of any reason for supposing that the nervous anatomy of the "dark haired race" differs in any essential respect from that of the Caucasian. But though the nerves of a Chinese as compared with those of the Occidental, may be, as the geometricians say

"similar and similarly situated," nothing is plainer than that they are nerves of a very different sort from those with which we are familiar.

It seems to make no particular difference to a Chinese how long he remains in one position. He will write all day, like an automaton. If he is a handicraftsman, he will stand in one place from dewy morn till dusky eve, working away at his weaving, his gold-beating, or whatever he may be, and do it every day, without any variation in the monotony, and apparently no special consciousness that there is any monotony to be varied. In the same way Chinese school children are subjected to an amount of confinement, unrelieved by any recesses or change of work, which would soon drive Western pupils to the verge of insanity. The very infants in arms instead of squirming and wriggling as our children begin to do as soon as they are born, lie as impassive as so many mud gods. And at a more advanced age, when Western children would vie with the monkey in its wildest antics, Chinese children will often stand, sit or squat, in the same posture for a great length of time.

It seems to be a physiological fact, that to the Chinese, exercise is superfluous. They cannot understand the mania which seems to possess all classes of foreigners alike, to walk, when there is no desire to go anywhere, much less can they comprehend the impulse to race over the country at the risk of one's life, in such a singular performance as that known as a "paper hunt," or the motive which impels men of good social position, to stand all the afternoon in the sun, trying to knock a base-ball to some spot where it shall be inaccessible to some other persons, or, on the other hand, struggling to catch the same ball with celerity, so as to "kill" another person on his "base!" Why any mortal should do acts like this, when he is abundantly able to hire coolies to do them for him, is, we repeat, essentially incomprehensible to a Chinese, nor is it any more comprehensible to him, because he has heard it explained many times.

One of the most perfect exemplifications of the automatic nature of Chinese physical activity with which we are acquainted, is the process of malletting for a dentist. Those who have been compelled to submit to this form of torture, know how difficult it is in any Occidental land to get a person to mallet, who shall

deliver his strokes in an even succession, and of a uniform weight. It takes long practice upon a long line of victims, before anything like a steady average is maintained. Now watch the nearly automatic operation of the "boy," in the office of the first dentist toward which harsh fate drives you in China. The boy is a very nearly ideal machine, and he never knows that he is using his nervous system at all, as perhaps indeed, he is not!

In the item of sleep, the Chinese establishes the same difference between himself and the Occidental, as in the directions already specified. Generally speaking, he is able to sleep anywhere. None of the trifling disturbances which drive us to despair, annoy him. With a brick for a pillow, he can lie down on his bed of stalks, or mud bricks or rattan, and sleep the sleep of the just, with no reference to the rest of creation. He does not want his room darkened, nor does he require others to be still. The "infant crying in the night" may continue to cry for all he cares, for it does not disturb him. In some regions, the entire population seem to fall asleep, as by a common instinct (like that of the hibernating bear) during the first two hours of summer afternoons, and they do this with regularity, no matter where they may be. At two hours after noon the universe at such seasons is as still as at two hours after midnight. In the case of most working people at least, and also in that of many others, position in sleep is of no sort of consequence. It would be easy to raise in China, an army of a million men—nay of ten millions—tested by competitive examination, as to their capacity to go to sleep across three wheelbarrows, with head downwards, like a spider, their mouths wide open and a fly inside!

Beside this, we must take account of the fact that in China breathing seems to be optional. There is nowhere any ventilation worth the name, except when a typhoon blows the roof from a dwelling, or when a family compels the owner to pull the house down to sell the timbers. We hear much of Chinese overcrowding, but overcrowding is the normal condition of the Chinese, and they do not appear to be inconvenienced by it at all, or in so trifling a degree, that it scarcely deserves mention. If they had an outfit of Anglo-Saxon nerves, they would be as wretched as we frequently suppose them to be.

The same freedom from the tyranny of nerves is exhibited in the Chinese endurance of physical pain. Those who have any acquaintance with the operations in hospitals in China, know how common, or rather how almost universal it is, for the patients to bear without flinching a degree of pain from which the stoutest of us would shrink in terror. It would be easy to expand this topic alone into an essay, but we must pass it by, merely calling attention to a remark of George Eliot, in one of her letters. "The highest calling and election," she says—irritated no doubt, by theological formulas for which she had no taste—"is to do without opium, and to bear pain with clear-eyed endurance." If she is right, there can be little doubt that most Chinese, at least, have made their calling and election sure.

It is a remark of Mrs. Browning, that "Observation without sympathy is torture." So it doubtless is to persons of a sensitive organization like the distinguished poetess, as well as to a multitude of others of her race. We all of us grow rapidly weary of being stared at by the swarms of curious Chinese who crowd about a foreigner, in every spot to which foreigners do not commonly resort. We often declare that we shall "go wild" if we cannot in some way disperse those who are subjecting us to no other injury than that of unsympathetic observation. But to the Chinese, this instinctive feeling of the Occidental is utterly incomprehensible. He does not care how many people see him, nor when, nor for how great a length of time, and he cannot help suspecting that there must be something wrong about persons who so vehemently resent mere inspection.

It is not alone when he sleeps, that an Occidental requires quiet, but most of all when he is sick. Then, if never before, he demands freedom from the annoyance of needless noises. Friends, nurses, physicians all conspire to insure this most necessary condition for recovery. And if recovery is beyond hope, then more than ever is the sufferer allowed to be in as great peace as circumstances admit. Nothing in the habits of the Chinese presents a greater contrast to those of Westerners, than the behaviour of the Chinese to one another in cases of sickness. The notification of the event is a signal for all varieties of raids upon the patient, from every quarter, in numbers proportioned to the gravity of the disease. Quiet is not for a moment to be

thought of, and strange to say no one appears to desire it. The bustle attendant upon the arrival and departure of so many guests, the work of entertaining them, the wailings of those who fear that a death is soon to take place, and especially the pandemonium made by priests, priestesses, and others, to drive away the malignant spirits, constitute an environment from which death would be to most Europeans a happy escape. Occidentals cannot fail to sympathize with the distinguished French lady, to whom reference has been already made, who sent word to a caller that she "begged to be excused, as she was engaged in dying." In China such an excuse would never be offered; nor if it were offered, would it be accepted.

It remains to speak of the worries and anxieties to which humanity is everywhere subjected in this distracted world. The Chinese are not only as accessible to these evils as any other people, but far more so. The conditions of their social life are such, that in any given region, there is a large proportion who are always on the ragged edge of ruin. A slight diminution of the rainfall means starvation to hundreds of thousands. A slight increase in the rainfall means the devastation of their homes by destructive floods, for which there is no known remedy. No Chinese is safe from the entanglement of a lawsuit, which, though he be perfectly innocent, may work his ruin. Many of these disasters are not only seen, but their stealthy and steady approach is perceived, like the gradual shrinking of the iron shroud. To us, nothing is more dreadful, than the momentary expectation of a calamity, which cannot be forefended, and which may bring all that is horrible in its train. The Chinese face these things, perhaps because they seem to be their normal state, with a "clear-eyed endurance," which is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the race. Those who have witnessed the perfectly quiet starvation in times of devastating famine, of millions, will be able to understand what is here meant. To be fully appreciated, it must be seen, but seen on no matter what scale, it is as difficult for an Occidental really to understand it, as it is for a Chinese truly to understand the idea which the Anglo-Saxon has inherited and developed, of personal and social liberty.

In whatever aspect we regard them, the Chinese are and must continue to be to us more or less a puzzle, but we shall make

no approach to comprehending them, until we have it settled firmly in our minds, that as compared with us, they are gifted with the "absence of nerves." What the bearing of this pregnant proposition may be on the future impact of this race with our own, —an impact likely to become more violent as the years go by— we shall not venture to conjecture. We have come to believe, at least in general, in the survival of the most fit. Which is the best adapted to survive in the struggles of the twentieth century, the "nervous" European, or the tireless, all-pervading and phlegmatic Chinese?

CHAPTER XXIII.

DISREGARD OF FOUNDATIONS.

It appears to be a general defect in the architecture of the Chinese, that in the construction of their buildings, the base is the part which receives the least attention, and upon which the smallest expenditure is bestowed. Millions upon millions of people in China never in the whole course of their lives see a mountain, or even a hill. Where there are no mountains, stone is sure to be very expensive, and for building purposes, so far as the bulk of the population is concerned, may be said to be practically unknown. The next best substitute is brick, and owing to the high price of fuel, Chinese bricks are almost certain to be very imperfectly baked. The mud of which they are composed is thrown loosely into the mold, the surface is scraped to a rough level, and when the brick is sufficiently sun-dried to bear transportation, it is placed in the kiln. Owing to the fact that it has not been pressed, and that it has been only half burned, the completed brick is full of cavities, and is almost as porous as a sponge. Wherever the soil is impregnated with soda, as is the case in a large part of the great plains, the soda is drawn up by capillary attraction into the bricks, and also into the structure above, which gradually scales away, at the base, till it comes to resemble a wall of cheese which has been persistently nibbled at by rats. To counteract these results, various substances such as straw, thin boards, etc., are introduced above the foundation, but these are merely palliatives, and do very little to hinder the disintegration, which is often so rapid, that in a few years it becomes necessary to renew the foundation a little at a time without disturbing the wall above.

Besides the inherent defect of the bricks, Chinese builders almost invariably add two others, too shallow an excavation for

such foundation as there is, and the use of a very insufficient quantity of lime. It is not uncommon to see a brick wall laid almost upon the surface of the ground and not unfrequently with no lime at all, in situations where a foreign contractor would dig a trench, five feet deep and use lime by the ton. The object which the foreign builder has in view is durability, the object which the Chinese builder has in view is economy of materials. Whoever wishes to see an example of this defective construction on an immense scale, in a situation where one would have looked for more thorough work, has but to walk for a few miles along the base of the wall surrounding the Imperial city in Peking. It would seem as if the only Chinese structures which are sure to be adequately built, are the pawn-shops, which are in reality a kind of treasure-houses, in which security is of capital importance.

This general characteristic of Chinese architecture, which does so much to prevent the preservation of ancient buildings is analagous to an intellectual fact in the Chinese nature. The Chinese show a conspicuous lack of mathematical training. They do not start from simple postulates and unfold a connected series of truths, each one of which is at once felt to be connected with what has gone before by a link that cannot be broken. It is difficult to imagine a Chinese examination for the degree of Flourishing Talent, or that of Selected Man, of which questions on the science of Logic should form a constituent part. It is hard to conceive of Chinese minds consciously compelling themselves to formulate the laws of Identity, of Contradiction and of Excluded Middle, yet it is quite certain that a complete recognition of the proposition that "A equals A," and that "A is not not-A," would put an end at one blow to a large part of what every Chinese supposes himself to believe on certain subjects.

The reason why Chinese unite so cheerfully the belief in absolute contradictories, is not because they are not amenable to the laws of thought which rule the rest of mankind, but because owing to vicious mental processes of obscuration, these contradictories have no opportunity of being recognized as such. The Chinese have no instinct of definition, in our strict sense of delimination, the selection of certain predicates which are affirmed, and the negativing of all others. They are not analytical, and it is often exceedingly difficult to conjecture the process by which

they have arrived at certain conclusions, or even to understand the steps of the process if we happen to succeed in discovering some of them. They constantly take for granted the very things which to our thought require the most rigid proof, and expend much ingenuity in elaborating *non sequiturs*, which are of no probative value whatever.

Modern jurisprudence has developed an interesting and self consistent theory of the laws of evidence, which have become gradually settled by the practice of generations of courts. Evidence is direct, or it is circumstantial, it is admissible or inadmissible, it is relevant or it is irrelevant. Each of these terms has come to have a more or less well settled and technical meaning, and the numerous rules governing the reception of evidence, reduce the conduct of a strongly contested suit in a modern court, to a species of chess game, in which, while the moves cannot be foreseen they must all be in accordance with the strict rules which govern the game, and which will never be set aside by any judge for any person whatsoever. Contrast all this with the proceedings in a Chinese court of law, even when (as sometimes happens) the magistrate is just, and wishes to do what ought to be done. All sorts of evidence is admitted, there is nothing so irrelevant as to be on that account excluded, wide areas which ought to be traversed to get at collateral facts are not only not traversed, but are not thought of by anyone whatever, and it will not be strange if the case is decided at last, on some minor side issue, to the utter ignoring and disappearance from view of the matter upon which the trial began. In making these comments upon Chinese legal proceedings, forcible illustrations of the justice of which will occur to every reader, we do not wish to be understood as referring to the difficulty of securing an upright magistrate, and a fair trial. That topic is susceptible of the most ample treatment, but what we have now to say relates to the proposition, that such is the constitution of the Chinese mind, that no matter how upright the magistrate, if a British appellate court had the opportunity of revising the proceedings of a Chinese trial, there would not be enough left of those proceedings to make a gun-wadding!

An excellent example of the Chinese disregard for foundations is found in their histories. Instead of treating of the prehistoric

period of their race, as a territory which cannot be explored with certainty and in regard to which no positive affirmations can be made, it appears "that ancient Chinese writers, of a period antecedent to the foundation of the Han dynasty, indulged an exuberant fancy in the enumeration of long lines of dynastic rules, to occupy the myriads of ages, which it was fabled, had elapsed since the power of Heaven and Earth had first united to produce man as the possessor of the soil of China." Mr. Mayers, from whom this observation is quoted, proceeds to remark that "no actual weight is attached even by Chinese writers to the statements handed down by the fabulists of antiquity regarding prehistoric epochs and dynastic lines. It is only in the next grand division of legendary record—the age of Yao and Shun and their successors—that a claim to anything resembling authenticity is set up; and even here the sterner requirements of European criticism demand proofs which native historians are content to forego." How different is this spirit from that of Occidental exactitude, it is needless to point out. There is a story of a Newfoundland farmer who boasted of the density of the fogs in his country, and, in proof, affirmed that he had a party of men at work shingling a barn, and the fog was so thick at the time, that they unwittingly shingled forty feet into it, before they discovered their mistake! The Chinese have shingled backward into the fogs of antiquity, for some thousands of years, and have never detected the point where the roof of history, and the fog of myth unite. No wonder that one of their sayings declares that rather than to believe all that is in the book of History, it would be better that there were no book of History.

That which is true of the historical horizon of the Chinese, is yet more conspicuous when we consider the basis on which the popular religions of the Empire are supposed to rest. Taoism and Buddhism have each histories of their own, and these histories are no doubt known to a select few within the inner circles of their priesthood. But generally speaking even the priests neither know nor care anything whatever as to the antecedents of the sect to which they are attached merely as parasites. To inquire of a Taoist priest the meaning of an obscure passage in the Tao Teh Ching is a work of supererogation, when we know beforehand that the priest cannot read a character of any kind. What does

the average Buddhist priest care whether Buddha lived six hundred years before the time of Christ as some maintain, or only two hundred years, or indeed whether he ever lived at all? To the followers of these priests, the questions of origin, of historical development, of relative importance and precedence of their respective doctrines are not only non-existent, but when such questions are raised, they cannot be so stated as to be made to appear important, and can with difficulty be so stated as to be intelligible.

The same is true in regard to the antecedents of the countless secret sects with which the Empire is honeycombed. The adherents of these societies have no idea when they were begun, nor by whom, nor for what purpose, neither do they concern themselves in the least about any of these points. The standard of the "practice of virtue" being what it is, any kind of organization which offers a method of practising virtue will be patronised by those who happen to be disposed to lay up a little merit, and to whom this avenue appears as good as any other. Any kind of a divinity which seems adapted to exert a favourable influence in any given direction will be patronized, just as a man who happens to need a new umbrella, goes to some shop where they keep such goods for sale. To enquire into the antecedents of the divinity who is thus worshipped, no more occurs to a Chinese than it would occur to an Englishman who wanted the umbrella, to satisfy himself as to the origin of umbrellas, and when they first came into general use.

It is not uncommon to meet with learned disquisitions upon the question as to the number of Buddhists and Taoists in China. In our view this question is exactly paralleled by an enquiry into the number of persons in the United Kingdom who use ten-penny nails as compared with the number of those who eat string-beans. Any one who wants to use a ten-penny nail will do so, if he can obtain it, and those who like string-beans and can afford to buy them, will presumptively consume them. The case is not different in China as regards the two most prominent "doctrines." Any Chinese who wants the services of a Buddhist priest, and who can afford to pay for them, will hire the priest, and thus be "a Buddhist." If he wants a Taoist priest, he will in like manner call him, and this makes him "a Taoist." It is of no consequence

to the Chinese *which* of the two he employs, and he will not improbably call them both at once, and thus be at once "a Buddhist" and "a Taoist." It has been well said that there is one thing which is worse than pure atheism, and that is entire indifference as to whether atheism is true. In China polytheism and atheism are but opposite facets of the same die, and are more or less consciously held for true by multitudes of educated Chinese, and with no sense of contradiction. Its absolute indifference to the profoundest spiritual truths in the nature of man, is the most melancholy characteristic of the Chinese mind, its ready acceptance of a body without a soul, of a soul without a spirit, of a spirit without a life, of a Cosmos without a cause, a Universe without a God.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONTEMPT FOR FOREIGNERS.

It is difficult for the European traveller who visits the city of Canton for the first time, to realize the fact that this Chinese emporium has enjoyed regular intercourse with Europeans for a period of more than three hundred and sixty years. During much the greater part of that time there was very little in the conduct of any Western nation in its dealings with the Chinese, of which we have any reason to be proud. The normal attitude of the Chinese towards the people of other lands who chose to come to China, for any purpose whatever, has been the attitude of the ancient Greeks to every nation not Grecian, to consider and to treat them as "barbarians." It is only since 1860, by a special clause in the treaties, that the character which signifies "barbarian," and which they had been in the habit of employing in official documents as synonymous with the word "foreign," was disallowed.

It must always be remembered in connection with the behaviour of the Chinese towards outside nations of the West, that the Chinese had for ages been surrounded only by the most conspicuous inferiority, and had thus been flattered in the most dangerous, because the most plausible and therefore the most effective way. Finding, as they did, that the foreigners with whom they came into contact could be alternately cajoled and bullied into conforming to the wishes of the Chinese, the latter were but confirmed in their instinct of unspeakable superiority and invariably acted upon this theory, until compelled to do otherwise, by the capture of Peking. Since that time, although less than a generation has passed away, great changes have come over China, and it might be supposed, that now at length foreign civilization and foreigners would be appreciated by the Chinese at their full value. No very extended or intimate acquaintance

with the Chinese people is needed, however, to convince any candid observer that the present normal attitude of the Chinese mind, official and unofficial, towards foreigners, is not one of respect. If the Chinese do not feel for us an actual contempt, they do feel and often entirely and unintentionally manifest a feeling of condescension. It is this phenomenon with which we have now to deal.

The first peculiarity which the Chinese notice in regard to foreigners, is their dress, and in this we think no one will claim that we have much of which we can be proud. It is true that all varieties of the Oriental costume seem to us to be clumsy, pendulous, and restrictive of "personal liberty," but that is because our requirements in the line of active motion are utterly different from those of any Oriental people. When we consider the Oriental modes of dress as adapted to Orientals, we cannot help recognizing the undoubted fact, that for Orientals this dress is exactly suited. But when Orientals, and especially Chinese, examine our costume, they find nothing whatever to admire, and much to excite criticism, not to say redicule. It is a postulate in Oriental dress that it shall be loose, and shall be draped in such a way as to conceal the contour of the body. A Chinese gentleman clad in a short frock would not venture to show himself in public, but numbers of foreigners are continually seen in every foreign settlement in China, clad in what are appropriately styled "monkey jackets." The foreign sack-coat, the double-breasted frock-coat (not a single button of which may be in use), and especially the hideous and amorphous abortion called a "dress-coat," are all equally incomprehensible to the Chinese, particularly as some of these garments do not pretend to cover the chest, which is the most exposed part of the body, made still more exposed by the unaccountable deficiencies of a vest cut away so as to display a strip of linen. Every foreigner in China is seen to have two buttons securely fastened to the tail of his coat, where there is never anything to button, and where they are as little ornamental as useful. If the dress of the male foreigner appears to the average Chinese to be essentially irrational and ridiculous, that of the foreign ladies is far more so. It violates Chinese ideas of propriety, not to say of decency, in a great variety of ways. Taken in connection with that freedom of intercourse between

the sexes which is the accompaniment of Occidental civilization, it is not strange that the Chinese who judge only from traditional standards of fitness, should thoroughly misunderstand and grossly misconstrue what they see.

Foreign ignorance of the Chinese language is a fertile occasion for a feeling of superiority on the part of Chinese. It makes no difference that a foreigner may be able to converse fluently in every language of modern Europe, if he cannot understand what is said to him by an ignorant Chinese coolie, the coolie will despise him in consequence. It is true that in so doing the coolie will only still further illustrate his own ignorance, but his feeling of superiority is not the less real on account of its inadequate basis. If the foreigner is struggling with his environment, and endeavouring to master the language of the people, he will be constantly stung by the air of disdain with which even his own servants will remark in an audible "aside," "Oh, he does not *understand!*" when the sole obstacle to understanding lies in the turbid statement of the Chinese himself. But the Chinese does not recognize this fact, nor if he should do so, would it diminish his sense of innate superiority. This general state of things continues indefinitely for all students of Chinese, for no matter how much one knows, there is always a continental area which he does not know. It seems to be a general experience though not necessarily a universal one, that the foreigner in China, after the preliminary stages of his experience are passed, gets little credit for anything which he happens to know, but rather discredit for the things which he does not know. The Chinese estimate of the value of the knowledge which the foreigners display of the Chinese language and Chinese literature is frequently susceptible of illustration by a remark of Dr. Johnson's in regard to woman's preaching which he declared to be like a dog's walking on its hind legs—it is not well done, but then it is a surprise to find it done at all!

Foreign ignorance of the customs of the Chinese is another cause of a feeling of superiority on the part of the Chinese. That anyone should be ignorant of what they have always known, seems to them to be almost incredible.

The fact, already adverted to, that a foreigner frequently does not know when he has been snubbed by indirect Chinese methods, leads the Chinese to look upon their unconscious victim with

conscious contempt. Scornful indifference to what "the natives" may think of us brings its own appropriate and sufficient punishment. What respect is likely to be felt by Chinese for the "merchant princes," and "solid men" of Western lands, when one of their great corporations, adopts a Chinese title, which is equivalent to proclaiming itself as a "Barbarian Bank?"

Many Chinese unconsciously adopt toward foreigners, an air of amused interest, combined with depreciation, like that with which Mr. Littimer regarded David Copperfield, as if mentally saying perpetually, "So young sir, so young!" This does not apply equally to all stages of one's experience in China, for experience accumulates more or less rapidly for shrewd observers, as foreigners in China are not unlikely to be. Still, whatever the extent of one's experience, there are multitudes of details in regard to social matters, of which one must necessarily be ignorant, for the reason that he has never heard of them, and there must be a first time for every acquisition.

Foreign inability to do what any ordinary Chinese can do with the greatest ease, leads the Chinese to look down upon us. We cannot eat what they eat, we cannot bear the sun, we cannot sleep in a crowd, in a noise, nor without air to breathe. We cannot scull one of their boats, nor can we cry "Yi! Yi!" to one of their mule teams, in such a way that the animals will do anything which we desire. It is well-known that the artillery department of the British army, on their way to Peking, was rendered perfectly helpless near Ho-hsi-wu, by the desertion of the native carters, for not a man in the British forces was able to persuade the Chinese animals to take a single step!

Inability to conform to *Chinese ideas and ideals*, in ceremony, as well as in what we consider more important matters, causes the Chinese to feel a thinly disguised contempt for a race whom they think will not and cannot be made to understand "propriety." It is not that a foreigner cannot make a bow, but he generally finds it hard to make a Chinese bow in a Chinese way, and the difficulty is as much moral as physical. The foreigner feels a contempt for the code of ceremonials, often frivolous in their appearance, and he has no patience, if he has the capacity, to spend twenty minutes in a polite scuffle, the termination of which is foreseen by both sides with absolute certainty. The foreigner

does not wish to spend his time in talking empty nothings for "an old half day." To him, time is money, but it is very far from being so to a Chinese, for in China everyone has an abundance of time, and very few have any money. No Chinese has ever yet learned that when he kills time, it is well to make certain that it is time which belongs to him, and not that of some one else.

With this predisposition to dispense as much as possible with superfluous ceremony because it is distasteful, and because the time which it involves can be used more agreeably in other ways, it is not strange that the foreigner, even in his own eyes, makes but a poor figure in comparison with a ceremonious Chinese. Compare the dress, bearings, and action of a Chinese official, with long flowing robes and graceful motions, with the awkward genuflections of his foreign visitor. It requires all the native politeness of the Chinese, to prevent them from laughing outright at the contrast. In this connection it must be noted that nothing contributes so effectively to the instinctive Chinese contempt for the foreigner, as the evident disregard which the latter feels for that official display, so dear to the Oriental. What must have been the inner thought of the Chinese who were told that they were to behold the "great American Emperor," and who saw General Grant in citizen's costume with a cigar in his mouth, walking along the open street? Imagine a foreign Consul, who ranks with a Chinese Taotai, making a journey to a provincial capital to interview the Governor, in order to settle an international dispute. Thousands are gathered on the city wall to watch the procession of the great foreign magnate, a procession which is found to consist of two carts, and riding horses, the attendants of the Consul being an interpreter, a Chinese acting as messenger *(t'ing-ch'ai)*, and another as cook! Is it any wonder that Orientals gazing on such a scene, should look with a curiosity which changes first to indifference, and then to contempt?

The particulars in which we consider ourselves to be unquestionably superior to the Chinese do not make upon them the impression which we should expect, and which we could desire. They recognize the fact that we are their superiors in mechanical contrivances, but many of these contrivances are regarded in the light in which we should look upon feasts of sleight of hand—curious, inexplicable, and useless. Our results appear to them to

be due to some kind of supernatural power, and it is remembered that Confucius refused to talk of magic. How profoundly indifferent the Chinese are to the wonders of steam and electricity practically applied, an army of disappointed contractors who have been in China, have discovered. With few exceptions the Chinese do not wish (though they may be forced to take) foreign models for anything whatever. They care nothing for sanitation, for ventilation, nor for physiology. They would like some, but by no means all, of the results of Western progress, without submitting to Western methods, but rather than submit to Western methods, they will cheerfully forego the results. Whatever has a direct unmistakable tendency to make China formidable as a "Power," that they want and will have, but the rest must wait, and if there were not a *Zeit-geist*, or Spirit-of-the-Age, superior to any Chinese, other improvements might wait long.

The Chinese do not appear to be much impressed by the undoubted ability of individual foreigners in practical lines. Saxons admire the man who "can," and as Carlyle was so fond of remarking, they make and call him "King." The skill of the foreigner is to the Chinese amusing and perhaps amazing, and they will by no means forget or omit to make demands upon it, the next time they chance to want anything done, but so far from regarding the foreigner in this respect as a model for imitation, it is probable that the idea does not even enter the skull of one Chinese in ten thousand. To them the ideal scholar continues to be the literary fossil who has learned everything, forgotten nothing, taken several degrees, has hard work to keep from starvation, and with claws on his hands several inches in length, cannot do any one thing (except to teach school), by which he can keep soul and body together, for "the Superior Man is not a Utensil."

Western nations, taken as a whole, do not impress educated Chinese with a sense of the superiority of such nations to China. This feeling was admirably exemplified in the reply of His Excellency Kuo, former Chinese Minister to Great Britain, when in answer to a question, Dr. Legge had told the Minister that in his —Dr. Legge's—opinion the moral condition of England is higher than that of China. After pausing to take in this judgment in all its bearings, His Excellency replied with deep feeling, "I am very

much surprised." Comparisons of this sort cannot be successfully made, in a superficial way, and least of all from a diplomatic point of view. They involve a minute acquaintance with the inner life of both nations, and an ability to appreciate the operations of countless causes in the gradual multiplication of effects. Into any such comparison it is far from being our purpose now to enter.

It was once thought that with Western inventions, China could be taken by storm. Knives, forks, stockings, and pianos were shipped to China from England, under the impression that this Empire was about to be "Europeanized." If there ever had been a time when the Chinese Empire was to be taken by storm in this way, that time would have been long ago, but there never was such a time. China is not a country, and the Chinese are not a people, to be taken by storm, with anything whatsoever. The only way to secure the solid and permanent respect of the Chinese race for Western peoples, as a whole, is by convincing object lessons, showing that Christian civilization in the mass, and in detail, produce effects which cannot be matched by the civilization which China already possesses. If this conviction cannot be produced, the Chinese will continue, and not without reason, to feel and to display in all their relation to foreigners, both condescension and contempt.

CHAPTER XXV.

INTELLECTUAL TURBIDITY.

In speaking of "intellectual turbidity" as a Chinese characteristic, we do not wish to be understood as affirming it to be a peculiarity of the Chinese, or that all Chinese possess it. Taken as a whole, the Chinese people seem abundantly able to hold their own with any race now extant, and they certainly exhibit no weakness of the intellectual powers, nor any tendency to such a weakness. At the same time it must be borne in mind that education in China is restricted to a very narrow circle, and that those who are but imperfectly educated, or who are not educated at all, enjoy in the structure of the Chinese language what is called by the lawyers an "accessory before the fact" to any most flagrant intellectual turbidity of which they may be disposed to be guilty.

Chinese nouns, as is by this time known to several, appear to be indeclinable. They are quite free from "gender" and "case." Chinese adjectives have no degrees of comparison. Chinese verbs are not hampered by any "voice," "mood," "tense," "number," or "person." There is no recognizable distinction between nouns, adjectives, and verbs, for any character may be used indiscriminately in either capacity (or incapacity) and no questions asked. We are not about to complain that the Chinese language cannot be made to convey human thought, nor that there are wide ranges of human thought which it is difficult or impossible to render intelligible in the Chinese language (though this appears to be a truth), but only to insist that such a language, so constructed, invites to "intellectual turbidity" as the incandescent heats of summer gently woo to afternoon repose.

Nothing is more common in conversation with an educated Chinese, than to experience extreme difficulty in ascertaining what he is talking about. At times his remarks appear to consist

exclusively of predicates, which are woven together in an intricate manner, the whole mass, seeming like Mahommed's coffin to hang in the air, attached to nothing whatever. To the mind of the speaker, the omission of a nominative is a point of no consequence. He knows what *he* is talking about, and it never occurs to him that this somewhat important item of information is not conveyed to the mind of his auditor by any kind of intuition. It is remarkable what expert guessers long practice has made most Chinese, in reading a meaning into words which do not convey it, by the simple practice of supplying subjects or predicates as they happen to be lacking. It is often the most important word in the whole sentence which is suppressed, the clue to which may be entirely unknown. There is very frequently nothing in the form of the sentences, the manner of the speaker, his tone of voice, nor in any concomitant circumstance, to indicate that the subject has changed, and yet one suddenly discovers that the speaker is not now speaking of himself, as he was a moment ago, but of his grandmother, who lived in the days of Tao Kuang. How he got there, and also how he got back again, often remains an insoluble mystery, but we see the feat accomplished every day. To a Chinese there is nothing more remarkable in a sudden invisible leap without previous notice, from one topic, one person, one century to another, than in the ability of a man who is watching an insect on the window pane to observe at the same time and without in the least deflecting his eyes, a herd of cattle on a distant hill, situated in the same line of vision.

The fact that Chinese verbs have no tenses, and that there is nothing to mark transitions of time, or indeed of place, does not tend to clarify one's perceptions of the inherently turbid. Under such circumstances, the best the poor foreigner can do, who wishes to keep up the appearance at least of following in the train of the vanished thought, is to begin a series of catechetical inquiries, like a frontier hunter "blazing" his way through a pathless forest, with a hatchet. "*Who was this person that you are talking about now?*" This being ascertained it is possible to proceed to inquire, "*Where was this?*" "*When was it?*" "*What was it that this man did?*" "*What was it that they did about it?*" "*What happened then?*" At each of these questions, your Chinese friend gazes at you with a bewildered and perhaps an appealing look,

as if in doubt whether you have not parted with all your five senses. But a persistent pursuit of this silken thread of categorical inquiry, will make it the clue of Ariadne, in delivering one from many a hopeless labyrinth.

To the educated Chinese, any idea whatever, comes as a surprise, for which it is by no means certain that he will not be totally unprepared. He does not understand, because he does not expect to understand, and it takes him an appreciable time to get such intellectual forces as he has, into a position to be used at all. His mind is like a rusty old smooth-bore cannon, mounted on an old decrepit carriage, which requires much hauling about, before it can be pointed at anything, and then it is sure to miss fire. Thus when a person is asked a simple question, such as "How old are you?" he gazes vacantly at the questioner, and asks in return, "I?" To which you respond, "yes, you." To this he replies with a summoning up of his mental energies for the shock, "How old?" "Yes, how old?" Once more adjusting the focus, he inquires, "How old am I?" "Yes," you say, "How old are you?" "Fifty eight," he replies, with accuracy of aim, his piece being now in working order. In like manner, if anyone knocks on the gate at night, and the keeper inquires "Who is it?" the invariable reply will be "I," regardless of the fact that no "I" can pierce a closed door.

A prominent example of intellectual turbidity is the prevalent habit of announcing as a reason for a fact, the fact itself. "Why do you not put salt into bread-cakes?" you ask of a Chinese cook. "We do not put salt into bread-cakes" is the explanation. "How is it that with so much and such beautiful ice in your city, none of it is stored up for winter?" "No, we do not store up ice for winter in our city." If the Latin poet who observed, "Happy is he who is able to know the reasons of things," had lived in China, he might have modified his poetry so as to read, "Unhappy is the man who essays to find out the reasons of things."

Another mark of intellectual torpor is the inability of an ordinary mind to entertain an idea, and then pass it on to another in its original shape. To tell A something which he is to tell B, in order that C may govern his actions thereby, is in China one of the most fatuous of undertakings. Either the message will never be delivered at all, because the parties concerned did not

understand that it was of importance, or it reaches C in such a shape that he cannot comprehend it, or in a form totally at variance with its original. To suppose that three cogs in so complicated a piece of machinery are capable of playing into each other without such friction as to stop the works, is to entertain a very wild hope. Even minds of considerable intelligence find it hard to take in and then give out an idea without addition or diminution, just as clear water is certain to refract the image of a straight stick, as if it were a broken one.

Illustrations of these peculiarities will meet the observant foreigner at every turn. "Why did he do so?" you inquire in regard to some preposterous act. "Yes," is the compendious reply. There is a certain numeral word in constant use, which is an aggravating accessory to vague replies. It signifies both interrogatively. "How many," and affirmatively "several." "How many days *(chi-jih)* have you been here?" you ask. "Yes, I have been here several days *(chi-jih)*" is the reply. Of all the ambiguous words in the Chinese language, probably the most ambiguous is the personal (or impersonal) pronoun *t'a*, which signifies promiscuously "he," "she," or "it." Sometimes the speaker designates the subject of his remarks by vaguely waving his thumb in the direction of the subject's home, or toward the point where he was last heard of. But more frequently the single syllable *t'a* is considered wholly sufficient as a relative, as a demostrative pronoun, and as a specifying adjective. Under these circumstances, the talk of a Chinese will be like the testimony of a witness in an English Court, who described a fight in the following terms: "He'd a stick, and he'd a stick, and he w'acked he, and he w'acked he, and if he'd a w'acked he as hard as he w'acked he, he'd a killed he, and not he he." "Why did you not come when you were called?" you venture to inquire of a particularly negligent servant. "Not on account of any reason," *(pu yin wei shen ma yuan ku)* he answers with what appears to be frank precision. The same state of mental confusion leads to a great variety of acts, often embarrassing and to a well ordered Occidental intellect always irritating. The cook makes it a matter of routine practice to use up the last of whatever there may be in his charge, and then serves the next meal minus some invariable concomitant. When asked what

he means by it, he answers ingenuously that *there was no more.* "Then why did you not ask for more in time?" "I did not ask for any more" is his satisfactory explanation. The man to whom you have paid a sum of cash in settlement of his account, going to the trouble of unlocking your safe and making change with scrupulous care, sits talking for "an old half day" on miscellaneous subjects, and then remarks with *nonchalance*, "I have still another account besides this one." "But why did you not tell me when I had the safe open so that I could do it all at once?" "Oh, I thought that account and this one had nothing to do with each other!" In the same way a patient in a dispensary who has taken a liberal allowance of the time of the physician, retires to the waiting room, and when the door is next opened, advances to re-enter. Upon being told that his case has been disposed of, he observes with delightful simplicity, "But I have got another different disease besides that one!" Many such phenomena of Chinese life may serve to remind one of a remark in one of the novels of Charles Reade, that "Mankind are not lacking in intelligence, but they have one intellectual defect—they are Muddleheads!"

A Chinese education by no means fits its possessors to grasp a subject in a comprehensive and practical manner. It is popularly supposed in Western lands that there are certain preachers, of whom it can be truthfully affirmed that if their text had the small-pox, the sermon would not catch it. The same phenomenon is found among the Chinese, in forms of peculiar flagrance. Chinese dogs do not as a rule take kindly to the pursuit of wolves, and when a dog is seen running after a wolf, it is not unlikely that the dog and the wolf will be moving, if not in opposite directions, as least at right angles to one another. Not without resemblance to this oblique chase, s the pursuit of a Chinese speaker of a perpetually retreating subject. He scents it often, and now and then he seems to be on the point of overtaking it, but he retires at length, much wearied, without have come across it in any part of his course.

The Chinese believe that if the heads of two persons guilty of adultery are put in a tub of water, and are allowed to float, they will meet, and that this is a proof positive of guilt (albeit too much resembling the directions for identifying the body

of a person found drowned, by "a marked impediment in his speech.") Not unlike this experiment of the two heads frequently appear to be the efforts of a Chinese speaker to come up with his theme; both parties seem to be on hand, and in a fluid condition, but they do not meet except by accident and then only for a moment. But with all their short-comings in this respect, it is doubtful whether the Chinese are sinners above the rest of the human race, though owing to their fatal fluency as mere talkers, they certainly appear to be so.

China is the land of sharp contrasts, the very rich and the wretchedly poor, the highly educated and the utterly ignorant, living side by side. Those who are both very poor and very ignorant, as is the fate of millions, have indeed so narrow a horizon, that intellectual turbidity is compulsory. Their existence is merely that of a frog in a well, to which even the heavens appear only as a strip of darkness. Ten miles from their native place many such persons have never been, and have no conception of any conditions of life other than those by which they have always been surrounded. In many of them even the instinctive curiosity common to all the races, seems dormant or blighted. Many Chinese, who know that a foreigner has come to live within a mile from their homes, never think to inquire where he came from, who he is, or what he wants. They know how to struggle for an existence, and they know nothing else. They do not know whether they have three souls, as is currently supposed, or one, or none, and so long as the matter has no relation to the price of grain, they do not see that it is of any consequence whatever. They believe in a future life, in which the bad will be turned into dogs and insects, and they also believe in annihilation pure and simple, in which the body becomes dirt, and the soul—if there be one—fades into the air. They are the ultimate outcome of the forces which produce what is in Western lands called a "practical man," whose life consists of two compartments, a stomach and a cash-bag. Such a man is the true positivist, for he cannot be made to comprehend anything which he does not see or hear, and of causes as such, he has no conception whatever. Life is to him a mere series of facts, mostly disagreeable facts, and as for anything beyond, he is at once an atheist, a polytheist, and an agnostic. An occasional prostration to he knows not what, or

perhaps an offering of food to he knows not whom, suffices to satisfy the instinct of dependence, but whether even this instinct finds even this expression, will depend largely upon what is the custom of those about him. In him the physical element of the life of man has alone been nourished, to the utter exclusion of the psychical and the spiritual. The only method by which such beings can be rescued from their torpor is by a transfusion of a new life, which shall reveal to them the sublime truth uttered by the ancient patriarch, "There is a spirit in man," for only thus is it that "the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ABSENCE OF PUBLIC SPIRIT.

THE Book of Odes, one of the most ancient of the Chinese Classics, contains the following prayer, supposed to be uttered by the husbandmen, "May it rain first on our public fields, and afterwards extend to our private ones." Whatever may have been true of the palmy days of the Chou dynasty and of those which preceded it, there can be no doubt that very little praying is done in the present day, either by husbandmen, or any other private individuals, for rain which is to be applied "first" on the "public fields." The Chinese government, as we are often reminded, is patriarchal in its nature, and demands filial obedience from its subjects. A plantation negro who had heard the saying, "Every man for himself, and God for us all," failed to reproduce the precise shade of its thought, in his own modified version as follows, "Every man for himself, and *God for himself!*" This new form of an old adage contains in a nutshell the substance of the views of the average Chinese, with regard of the powers that be. "I, for my part, am obliged to look out for myself," he seems to think, if indeed he bestows any thought whatever on the government, and "the government is old enough and strong enough to take care of itself without any help of mine." The government, on the other hand, although patriarchal, is much more occupied in looking after the patriarch, than in caring for the patriarch's family. Generally speaking, it will do very little to which it is not impelled by the danger, if it does nothing at first, of having to do all the more at a later date. The people recognize distinctly that the prospective loss of taxes is the motive force in government efforts to mitigate disasters such as the continual outbreaks of irrepressible rivers. What the people do for themselves in endeavouring to prevent calamities of this sort,

is due to the instinct of self-preservation, for the people thus make sure that the work is done, and also escape the numberless exactions which are sure to be the invariable concomitants of government energy, locally applied.

No more typical example could be selected of the neglect of public affairs by the government, and the absence of public spirit among the people, than the condition of Chinese roads. There are abundant evidences in various part of the Empire, that there once existed great imperial highways connecting many of the most important cities, and that these highways were paved with stone and bordered with trees. The ruins of such roads are found not only in the neighbourhood of Peking, but in such remote regions as Hunan and Szechuen. Vast sums must have been expended on their construction, and it would have been comparatively easy to keep them in repair, but this has been uniformly neglected, so that the ruins of such highways present serious impediments to travel, and the tracks have been abandoned from sheer necessity. It has been supposed that this decay of the great lines of traffic took place during the long period of disturbances before the close of the Ming dynasty, and at the beginning of the present Manchu line, but making all due allowance for political convulsions, two hundred and fifty years is surely a period sufficiently long in which to restore the arteries of the Empire. No such restoration has either taken place or been attempted, and the consequence is the state of things with which we are but too familiar.

The attitude of the government is handsomely matched by that of the people, who each and all are in the position of one who has no care nor responsibility for what is done with the public property, so long as he personally is not the loser. In fact the very conception that the roads, or that anything, belong to "the public" is totally alien to the Chinese mind. The "streams and mountains" (that is the Empire) are supposed to be the property in fee simple of the Emperor for the time, to have and to hold as long as he can. The roads are his too, and if anything is to be done to them, let him do it. But the greater part of the roads do not belong to the Emperor, in any other sense than that in which the farms of the peasants belong to him, for these roads are merely narrow strips of farms devoted to the

use of those who wish to use them, not with the consent of the owner of the land, for that was never asked, but from the force of necessity. The entire road belongs to some farm, and pays taxes like any other land, albeit the owner derives no more advantage from its use than does anyone else. Under these circumstances, it is evidently the interest of the farmer to restrict the roads as much as he can, which he does by an extended system of ditches and banks designed to make it difficult for any one to traverse any other than the narrow strip of land which is indispensable for communication. If the heavy summer rains wash away a part of the farm into the road, the farmer goes to the road and digs his land out again, a process which, combined with natural drainage and the incessant dust-storms, results eventually in making the road a canal. Of what we mean by "right of way" no Chinese has the smallest conception.

Travellers on the Peiho river, between Tientsin and Peking, have sometimes noticed in the river little flags, and upon inquiry have ascertained that they indicated the spots where torpedoes had been planted, and that passing boats were expected to avoid them! A detachment of Chinese troops engaged in artillery practice has been known to train their cannon directly across one of the leading highways of the Empire, to the great interruption of traffic and to the terror of the animals attached to carts, the result being a serious runaway accident.

A man who wishes to load or to unload his cart, leaves it in the middle of the roadway, while the process is going on, and whoever wishes to use the road, must wait until the process is completed. If a farmer has occasion to fell a tree he allows it to fall across the road, and travellers can tarry until the trunk is chopped up and removed.

The free and easy ways of the country districts are well matched by the encroachments upon the streets of cities. The wide streets of Peking are lined with stalls and booths which have no right of existence, and which must be summarily removed if the Emperor happens to pass that way. As soon as the Emperor has passed, the booths are in their old places. The narrow passages which serve as streets in most Chinese cities are choked with every form of industrial obstruction. The butcher, the barber, the peripatetic cook with his travelling restaurant, the

carpenter, the cooper, and countless other workmen, plant themselves by the side of the tiny passage which throbs with the life of a great metropolis, and do all they can to form a strangulating clot. Even the women bring out their quilts and spread them on the road, for they have no space so broad in their exiguous courts. There is very little which the Chinese do at all, which is not at some time done on the street.

Nor are the obstructions to traffic of a movable nature only. The carpenter leaves a pile of huge logs in front of his shop, the dyer hangs up his long bolts of cloth, and the flour-dealer his strings of vermicelli across the principal thoroughfare, for the space opposite to the shop of each, belongs not to an imaginary "public," but to the owner of the shop. The idea that this alleged ownership of the avenues of locomotion entails any corresponding duties in the way of repair, is not one which the Chinese mind, in its present stage of development, is capable of taking in at all. No one individual, even if he were disposed to repair a road (which would never happen) has the time or the material wherewith to do it, and for many persons to combine for this purpose, would be totally out of the question, for each would be in deep anxiety lest he should do more of the work, and receive less of the benefit, than some other person. It would be very easy for each local magistrate to require the villages lying along the line of the main highways or within a reasonable distance thereof, to keep the important arteries of travel passable at almost all seasons, but it is doubtful whether this idea ever entered the mind of any Chinese official.

Not only do the Chinese feel no interest in that which belongs to the "public," but all such property, if unprotected and available, is a mark for theft. Paving stones are carried off for private use, and square rods of the brick facing to city walls, gradually disappear. A wall enclosing a foreign cemetery in one of the ports of China was carried away till not a brick remained, as soon as it was discovered that the place was in charge of no one in particular. It is not many years since an extraordinary sensation was caused in the Imperial palace in Peking by the discovery that extensive robberies had been committed on the copper roofs of some of the buildings within the forbidden city. It is a common observation among the Chinese, that within the

Eighteen Provinces, there is no one so imposed upon and cheated, as the Emperor.

The question is often raised whether the Chinese have any patriotism, and it is not a question which can be answered in a word. There is undoubtedly a strong national feeling, especially among the literary classes, and to this feeling much of the hostility exhibited to foreigners and their inventions is to be traced. But that any considerable body of Chinese are actuated by a desire to serve their country, because it is their country, aside from the prospect of emolument, is a proposition which will require much more proof than has yet been offered to secure its acceptance by any one who knows the Chinese. It need not be remarked that a Chinese might be patriotic, without taking much interest in the fortunes of a Tartar dynasty like the present, but there is the best reason to think that whatever the dynasty might happen to be, the feeling of the mass of the nation would be the same as it is now: a feeling of profound indifference. The key-note to this view of public affairs was sounded by Confucius himself, in a pregnant sentence, found in the Analects; "The master said: He who is not in an office has no concern with plans for the administration of its duties." To our thought these significant words are partly the result, and to a very great degree the cause, of the constitutional unwillingness of the Chinese to interest themselves in matters for which they are in no way responsible.

M. Huc gives an excellent example of this spirit, to which every reader will be able to adduce parallels. "In 1851, at the period of the death of the Emperar Tao Kuang, we were travelling on the road from Peking, and one day when we had been taking tea at an inn in company with some Chinese citizens, we tried to get up a little political discussion. We spoke of the recent death of the Emperor, an important event, which of course must have interested everybody. We expressed our anxiety on the subject of the succession to the Imperial throne, the heir to which was not yet publicly declared. "Who knows," said we, "which of the three sons of the Emperor will have been appointed to succeed him? If it should be the eldest, will he pursue the same system of government? If the younger, he is still very young, and it is said that there are contrary influences, two

opposing parties at court; to which will he lean?" We put forward, in short, all kinds of hypotheses, in order to stimulate these good citizens to make some observation. But they hardly listened to us. We came back again and again to the charge, in order to elicit some opinion or other, on questions that really appeared to us of great importance. But to all our piquant suggestions they replied by shaking their heads, puffing out whiffs of smoke, and taking great gulps of tea. This apathy was really beginning to provoke us, when one of these worthy Chinese, getting up from his seat, came and laid his two hands on our shoulders in a manner quite paternal and said, smiling rather ironically, "Listen to me, my friend! Why should you trouble your heart and fatigue your head by all these vain surmises? The mandarins have to attend to affairs of State; they are paid for it. Let them earn their money then. But don't let us torment ourselves about what does not concern us. We should be great fools to want to do political business for nothing." "That is very conformable to reason," cried the rest of the company; and thereupon they pointed out to us that our tea was getting cold and our pipes were out."

When it is remembered that in the attack on Peking, in 1860, the British army was furnished with mules bought of the Chinese in the province of Shantung; that Tientsin and Tungchow made capitulations on their own account, agreeing to provide the British and French with whatever was wanted, if these cities were not disturbed; that most indispensable coolie work was done for the foreign allies by Chinese subjects hired for the purpose in Hong-kong, and that when these same coolies were captured by the Chinese army they were sent back to the British ranks with their cues cut off, it is not difficult to perceive that patriotism and public spirit, if such things exist at all in China, do not mean what these words imply to Anglo-Saxons.

That was a typical Chinese, who being in command of a Chinese war junk in the war of 1842, boarded one of the British gunboats before hostilities began, and asked to see the captain. On meeting that officer, the Chinese commander proceeded to remark that he himself was a "good flen" of the British captain, and he had no doubt that the latter was also a "good flen" to him. Under these circumstances, his proposition was, that since

it is evidently undesirable that one "good flen" should injure another "good flen," when the impending attack began, each captain should have his guns loaded with "fire-physic" only, and *no balls*. This, he said, would make "plenty noise, plenty smoke," and the incidental advantages would be obvious and mutual!

Let the reader imagine, if he can, a Chinese lad, who makes his living by hawking candy and roasted peanuts, upon hearing of the death of His Majesty T'ung Chih, inserting a placard in his basket, as certain lads of like condition did in the United States when President Garfield died, with the legend, "We mourn our country's loss!"

On one of the main lines of travel in a populous province of China, there is a spot which the traveller whose journey follows too soon after the rains, will have difficulty in passing. On one side of the highway stand an ancient temple to the God of War, and upon the opposite side is the ruin of one of the mediæval watch-towers which at short distances once lined the principal routes of travel. Between these two structures lies an utterly impassible morass. Significant conjunction! In the distance is seen the spider-line of the telegraph wire, which will render forever obsolete the watch-tower, and the God of War as well. Happy would it be for China, if the slender wires which now link together the widely sundered parts of the Empire, might be a visible symbol of a newly created public spirit, which, should animate the body politic, giving it a life and a vigour now unknown.

CHAPTER XXVII.

INABILITY TO CONSERVE TANGIBLE MEMORIALS OF THE PAST.

THERE is no nation existing, which has a greater regard for antiquity, and with more reason, than the Chinese. But there is no country in which it is possible to find so few material relics of the distant past, as in China. We have already spoken of the Chinese hunger for fame, as well as of the "disregard of foundations." We have now to notice the relation which these two characteristics bear to one another, and their connection with the instinct of conservatism. The Chinese are very desirous of transmitting to those who come after, as well as of making known to contemporaries, a knowledge of whatever tends to make themselves, their families, or their dynasty great or notable. This is an impulse which they share with the rest of the human race. The means by which they seek to accomplish this end are the erection of memorial temples, memorial portals *(P'ai-fang,)* stone or wooden tablets, and in the Ming dynasty the use of stone figures of men and animals lining the avenues to cemeteries.

Of the swift ruin which overtakes every form of building constructed on a Chinese plan, and of the ruin of the public roads, we have already spoken. Strictly speaking, there are no old temples in China, because no Chinese temple can withstand the elements more than a few score years at most, when it gives way to a new and revised edition, if it does not totally disappear. Temples, like fruit trees, have a definite period of life, and if that is to be prolonged, they must be perpetually grafted, or else new scions must be raised from the seed. The wooden lacquered tablets, which are so highly ornamental when new, and so dismal when old, and which play so important a part in gratifying the Chinese desire for "face," and "fame," have but a limited duration, and then disappear for ever,

More permanent by far are the portals which are erected to the great scholars, famous officers, virtuous widows and maidens who may be so honoured as to have the right to them conferred by Imperial favour. When these structures are made of well cut stone, are of the most advantageous size and well situated, they are the finest representation of Chinese architecture to be met with in the Empire. A wealthy citizen of Paris, London or New York, who wished to confer upon these cities a gift which should convey an accurate and attractive view of what the Chinese can achieve in ornamentation, could not do better than to order one of these *P'ai-fangs*, and have it set up in a public park, where it would be admired for many generations. The Chinese lavish great sums on these structures, which are to be seen in immense numbers just in proportion to the proximity of a supply of stones. If stones are not to be had, the portals are made of wood, as in Peking, and very much less than one generation is required to reduce them to a condition of ruin. Like all other Chinese erections, they give way at the bottom, the tall posts begin to lean in different directions, the lacquer scales off as if they had the leprosy in an exaggerated form, and large sections of the complicated ornamental woodwork at the top are seen to be on the point of falling. The same thing occurs in the case of the stone portals, but on a more impressive scale. Although built of materials which ought to endure for centuries, and although put up at great expense, it is rare to find specimens which are thirty years old and yet in good repair. The foundations sink, the strong iron clamps give way, the heavy transverse blocks of stone are wrenched from their mortises, and crack. Every projection appears to be starting from its socket, and however interested the traveller may be to ascertain the age of the work, or to study the curious carving which it displays, his first and instinctive anxiety is to get out from under it, before it falls. It is impossible to refrain from speculating as to the length of time ere the crazy framework will come down, and whether the law of chances will admit of its fall without killing anyone.

If comparative brevity of existence is true of such massive structures as the portals, it is much more the case as regards stone tablets, which constitute the ordinary vehicle for the conveyance of fame to posterity. If erected on a large scale,

they stand on the back of a gigantic tortoise, emblem of longevity, and appear at first adapted to execute the commission with which they are charged; to perpetuate fame for "an hundred generations," if not for "ten thousand antiquities." But the same vicious mode of construction, or rather destruction, rules the tablet, the portal and the temple. The foundation is inadequate, and sooner or later they all go down. The tortoise is decapitated by the attrition of ages, and buried up to the stump of his neck in the soil, while the precious fame-bearing tablet lies prone on the earth, or shattered into many pieces, the fame being thus administered in what the physicians call "divided doses." Or if the tablet as a whole holds together, it may form the seat at a way-side restaurant, a door-step, or even the pavement to a bridge. In any case the inscription has been cut so shallow that it is almost or quite illegible. The traveller may penetrate half of the provinces in China, may examine every venerable tablet which he sees, and yet not find one which dates as far back as the Mongol dynasty (500 years ago), except in some "Forest of Tablets" in a large city, under special care.

We began by remarking that no nation has a greater regard for antiquity than the Chinese, but contrast this wretched poverty of memorials of the past, with the overflowing wealth of the cities of the ancient Empires, now extinct, at the other end of the Asiatic continent, Babylon, Nineveh and Baalbek. Instead of lofty columns of porphyry, the ruins of an ancient Chinese city consist of an unlimited supply of bits of tiles and brickbats. The only way to identify the site of such an ancient city, as for example the Khanbalik of Kublai Khan near Peking, is to trace the mounds of earth, which give the mere outline of what was once one of the world's great capitals. Khanbalik was a comparatively modern city. What was the situation of the ancient capitals of the Yin, the T'ang and the Sung dynasties as compared with the cities now to be found in the neighbourhood, the traveller finds it very hard to ascertain, for in China there is most literally no continuing city. That the Chinese *wish* to keep in remembrance the situation of ancient places, is evident from the fact that in the historic parts of the Empire, it is common to find inscriptions over city gates, certifying that this was the "ancient" such and such a chou. In some instances this tradition is kept

alive simply by the pasting of a strip of red paper over the gate of a small market town, with characters conveying the announcement, although it is impossible to find a single person who can give the exact location of the ancient city.

The preservation of that historical knowledge of the past, for which the Chinese have so great a respect, while it cannot be entrusted to temples, portals, or tablets, for the reasons which we have already given, might be expected in the form of carefully prepared maps showing the old, the intermediate, and the new designations of places which for two or three millenniums have been historic. Works of this sort certainly do exist. One of them rejoices in the formidable title of *Li Tai Yü Ti Yen Ko Hsien Yao T'u*, or Map of the Imperial territory under successive dynasties with their changes. This appears to be exactly what is wanted by the student who wishes to revive the mighty past, and he sits down to an examination of the sixty or seventy maps, with a confidence that now at last the darkness of the bygone ages is to roll away, and light is to break forth in its place. We have spoken elsewhere of the Chinese "disregard of accurary," and these maps furnish fresh illustrations of this characteristic, whatever they may furnish in the line of ancient geography. They are drawn with the purpose of exhibiting both the ancient and the modern names at the same time, the former in black ink, and the latter in red. As the scale of the maps is not a large one, one result of this plan is to crowd out altogether a great many ancient names which ought to be noted, and as Chinese characters take up considerable room, another incidental result is to lead to the printing of the black characters immediately over the red, to the obliteration of the latter. Not only so, but extensive notes and explanations instead of being put at the edges of the maps, where there is always about one-third of the space vacant, are printed wherever it suited the fancy or convenience of the block-cutter, entirely covering up hundreds of square miles of territory, and in several cases literally stamping out of existence such important cities as Si-ngan Fu, and Peking, with all the country adjoining. These infelicities, however are trifling compared with another, which defeats the very object for which a map is made, to wit, to exhibit the relative situation of places on the earth's surface. For example, under the camp of the Contending

Kingdoms, it is impossible to determine either how many kingdoms are represented, or what were their boundaries.

Let us suppose, for example, that we wish to ascertain the situation of the state called Yen, the "Kingdom of Swallows," and of its capital, the Khanbalik of Kublai, the modern Peking. Not far from the ancient Yen, was the ancient Yu-chou, the modern Tungchow, which is about twelve miles east of the capital. Now by a minute inspection of some forty-five of these maps, we discover that in eighteen of them neither of the cities Yen and Yu is marked at all. In eight of the remaining maps Yen is noted, but not Yu, in others Yu but not Yen, and in only nine are both to be found. Judging then from these phenomena only, one would suppose these ancient cities to have been like a modern revolving lighthouse, visible only at intervals, and at intervals of great irregularity. But this is not all. Sometimes Yen is called Yen Kuo (the State of Yen), and sometimes it appears to be merely the city. In the map representing the "Seven Kingdoms," Yen has gone east about one geographical degree, and is perched on the Great Wall, while some centuries later it went as much to the north-west, though still adhering to the Great Wall, and is called "Eastern Yen," fully justifying by its rapid flight its name of the "Swallow Capital." But if Yen was peripatetic, Yu-chou was not less so, and in the ten times in which it emerges, it contrives to make a complete circuit of the modern Peking, appearing now on the east, then south, south-west, north-west, and north, its movement bearing some resemblance to the revolution of the constellation Ursa Major about the Polar Star, though in a reverse direction. But it must have been some time before even this erratic orbit was adopted, for in one of the earlier maps Yu-chou has gone eastward about seven degrees, and is discovered calmly seated at the edge of what is now the barrier between Corea and Shingking!

It is, we repeat, a singularly suggestive circumstance, that a people so exceptionally conservative of the past as the Chinese, should have so few enduring monuments or public works. All that can be said to come under this head are the Great Wall, the Grand Canal, the walls of cities, and river embankments. The Great Wall is doubtless a wonderful monument of human energy, and it has been remarked that it is the only artificial structure

which would arrest attention in a hasty survey of the surface of the globe. But the Great Wall has been subject to constant renewals, so that it is impossible to determine the real age of any particular part, and throughout a large portion of its course it is reduced to a mere heap of rubble. The same questions of identity of structure which occur in regard to the Great Wall, are constantly suggested by the many hundred city walls and over the Empire. Few of them can be proved to be of any great age, all of them are subject to constant renewal of the external facings, and many of them have been moved bodily from one place to another at irregular intervals.

The Grand Canal is a work which implies a high degree of civilization in the Mongol dynasty which ruled when it was dug, at a time when no canals of importance existed in Europe. But it has long since been allowed to go to ruin, a ruin hastened by the great T'ai-p'ing rebellion, and by the disasters caused by the alteration in the course of the Yellow River more than thirty years ago. It is still frequently described as capable of "accommodating ships of the largest burden," and as "lined with granite throughout a great part of its course," but the traveller who views the northern terminus of the "Grand Canal" at Tientsin, is disappointed to find that the narrow stream which passes under that name, is not a canal and is not grand. Should he pursue his travels for three hundred miles further to the city of Lin-ch'ing-chou in Shantung, he would find the true "Grand Canal" a mere mud ditch, a rod or two in width, with barely sufficient water to float a mud scow! River embankments of considerable antiquity exist in China in great numbers, and of great length. The utter neglect in which they are ordinarily left, is alternated in the rainy season with most frantic efforts to keep them in repair. The usefulness of these works is a matter as to which there is difference of opinion, but there can be little dissent from the proposition that it is remarkable that the Great Wall, the Grand Canal, city walls and river embankments should constitute "the only crystallized and accumulated labours of the Chinese people, through all the ages of their residence in China."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONSERVATISM.

It is true of the Chinese, to a greater degree than of any other nation in history, that their Golden Age is in the past. The Sages of antiquity themselves spoke with the deepest reverence of more ancient "ancients." Confucius declared that he was not an originator, but a transmitter. It was his mission to gather up what had once been known, but long neglected, or misunderstood. It was his painstaking fidelity in accomplishing this task, as well as the high ability which he brought to it, that gave the Master his extraordinary hold upon the people of his race. It is his relation to the past, as much as the quality of what he taught, that constitutes the claim of Confucius to the front rank of holy men. It is the Confucius theory of morals, that a good ruler will make a good people. The prince is the dish, the people are the water; if the dish is round, the water is round, if the dish is square, the water will be square also. Upon this theory, it is not strange that all the virtues are believed to have flourished in the days when model rulers existed. The most ignorant coolie will upon occasion remind us that in the days of "Yao and Shun," there was no necessity for closing the doors at night, for there were no thieves, and that if an article was lost on the highway, it was the duty of the first comer to stand guard over it, until the next one happened along, who took his turn, until the owner arrived, who always found his property perfectly intact. It is a common saying, that the present is inferior to the past in the items of benevolence and justice; but that in violations of conscience, the past cannot compete with the present.

This tendency to depreciate the present time is by no means confined to China, or to the Chinese, but is found with impartiality all over the earth, yet in the Celestial Empire it seems to have

attained a sincerity of conviction not elsewhere equalled. All that is best in the ancient days is believed to have survived in the *literature* to which the present day is the heir, and it is for this reason that this literature is regarded with such unmixed idolatry. The orthodox Chinese view of the Chinese Classics appears to be much the same as the orthodox Christian view in regard to the Hebrew Scriptures; they are supposed to contain all that is highest and best of the wisdom of the past, and to contain all that is equally adapted to the present time, and to the days of old. That anything is needed to supplement the Chinese Classics is no more believed by a good Confucianist, than it is believed by a good Christian that supplementary additions to the Bible are desirable or are to be expected. Both Christians and Confucianists agree in the general proposition, that when a thing is as good as it can be, it is idle to try to make it any better.

The literature of antiquity is that which has moulded the Chinese nation, and has brought about a system of government, which, whatever its other qualities, has been proved to possess that of persistence. Since self-preservation is the first law of nations as of individuals, it is not singular that a form of rule which an experience of unmatched duration has shown to be so well adapted to its end, should have come to be regarded with a reverence akin to that felt for the Classics. It would be a curious discovery if some learned student of Chinese history should succeed in ascertaining and explaining the processes by which the Chinese government came to be what it is. If ever those processes should be discovered, we think it certain that it will then be clearly seen why there have been in China so few of those interior revolutions to which all other peoples have been subject. There is a story of a man who built a stone wall six feet wide and only four feet high, and on being asked his reasons for so singular a proceeding, he replied that it was his purpose that when the wall blew over, it should be higher than it was before! The Chinese government is by no means incapable of being blown over, but it is a cube, and when it capsizes, it simply falls upon some other face, and to external appearance, as well as to interior substance, is the same that it has always been. Repeated experience of this process has taught the Chinese that this result is as certain, as that a cat will fall upon its feet, and the conviction

is accompanied by a most implicit faith in the divine wisdom of those who planned and built so wisely and so well. To suggest improvements would be the rankest heresy. Hence it has come about, that the unquestioned superiority of the ancients rests upon the firm basis of the inferiority of those who come after them.

With these considerations clearly in mind, it is not difficult to perceive the rationale of what seems at first the blind and obstinate adherence of the Chinese to the ways of the past. To the Chinese, as to the ancient Romans, the ideas of manners and of morals are interchangeable, for they have the same root and are in their essence identical. To them an invasion of their customs is an invasion of the regions which are most sacred. It is not necessary for this effect that the customs should be apprehended in their ultimate relations, or indeed, strictly speaking, apprehended at all. They are resolutely defended by an instinct similar to that which leads a she bear to defend her cubs. This instinct is not a Chinese instinct merely but it belongs to human nature. It has been profoundly remarked that millions of men are ready to die for a faith which they do not comprehend, and by the tenets of which they do not regulate their lives.

Chinese customs, like the Chinese language, have become established in some way to us unknown. Customs, like human speech once established, resist change. But the conditions under which Chinese customs and language crystallized into shape are in no two places exactly the same. Hence we have those perplexing variations of usage indicated in the common proverb already quoted in another connection, that customs differ every ten miles. Hence, too, we have the bewildering dialects. When once the custom or the dialect has become fixed, it resembles plaster-of-Paris which has set, and while it may be broken, it cannot be changed. This, at least, is the theory, but like other theories it must be made sufficiently elastic to suit the facts, which are that no mere custom is necessarily immortal, and given certain conditions, a change can be effected. No better illustration of this truth could be given than one drawn from the experience of the present dynasty in introducing an entirely new style of tonsure among their Chinese subjects. It was inevitable that such a conspicuous and tangible mark of subjection should have been bitterly resisted, even to the death, by great numbers of the

Chinese. But the Manchus showed how well they were fitted for the high task which they had undertaken, by their persistent adherence to the requirement; compliance with which was made at once a sign and a test of loyalty. The result is what we all see. The Chinese people are now more proud of their queues than of any other characteristic of their dress, and the rancorous hostility to the edict of the Manchus survives only in the turbans of the natives of the provinces of Canton and Fukien, coverings once adopted to hide the national disgrace.

The introduction of the Buddhist religion into China was accomplished only at the expense of a warfare of the most determined character, but once thoroughly rooted, it appears as much like a native as Taoism, and not less difficult to supplant.

The genesis of Chinese customs being what it is, it is easy to perceive that it is the underlying assumption that whatever is, is right. Thus a long established usage is a tyranny. Of the countless individuals who conform to the custom, not one is at all concerned with the origin or the reason of the acts. His business is to conform, and he conforms. The degree of religious faith in different parts of the Empire doubtless differs widely, but nothing can be more certain than that all the rites of the "three religions" are performed by millions, who are as destitute of anything which ought to be called faith, as they are of an acquaintance with Egyptian hieroglyphics. To any inquiry as to the reason for any particular act of religious routine, nothing is more common than to receive two answers: the first that the whole business of communication with the gods has be handed down from the ancients, and must therefore be on the firmest possible basis; the second, that "everybody" does so, and therefore the person in question *must* conform. As already pointed out, when the subject of Solidarity fell under consideration, in China the machinery moves the cogs, and not the cogs the machinery. While this continues to be always and everywhere true, it is also true that the merest shell of conformity is all that is demanded. It is a custom in Mongolia, according to Mr. Gilmour, for every one who can afford it, to use snuff, and to offer it to his friends. Everyone is provided with a little snuff-box, which he produces whenever he encounters a friend. If the person with the snuff-box happens to be out of snuff, that does not prevent the passing

of the snuff-box, of which each guest takes a deliberate, through imaginary pinch, and returns it to its owner. To seem to notice that the box is empty, would not be "good form," but by compliance with the proper usages, the "face" of the host is saved, and all is according to well settled precedent. In many important particulars it is not otherwise with the Chinese. The life may have long departed, but there remains the coral reef, the avenues to which in order to avoid shipwreck must be diligently respected.

When the subject of Politeness was under consideration, attention was called to the determination of a Chinese to do what he considers to be the "proper" thing, at the "proper" time, and in the "proper" way, regardless of other circumstances, and with a sole view to making it clear beyond question that he knows what that thing is. It is this spirit which results in cherishing the empty bottles of form, as if they were filled with all the odours of Araby the Blest. Thus a man who had been for many weeks a patient in a foreign hospital, came forward at a time when all the foreigners were assembled, and began to make an elaborate salaam before one of them. His salutation was returned, with the inquiry. "Are you going, then?" To this question the patient paid on attention whatever, but merely turned and performed his obeisance to another foreigner, and then to a third. When the inquiry had been twice repeated, he at last threw in what the dramatists call an "aside," to the effect that after he had completed his bows to all the hospital attendants, he should be able to speak, but not before. Hearing this, the foreigners left him, and went about their business, but they had not gone twenty steps, before the patient was heard shouting after them, in an imploring tone, "Don't go, don't go, I want to speak to you!" This was a typical example of ceremonial conservatism.

Many foreigners in China, who are perfectly willing to conform to Chinese ideas in regard to Chinese affairs, do not care to have Chinese ideas thrust upon them in regard to affairs which are not Chinese. It is often very difficult to prevent Chinese friends from inundating a foreign establishment on the 1st day of January, with a view to "salute the year," although the house may be full of foreign guests, and although the master thereof most decidedly does *not* wish to have his foreign year "saluted" on the Chinese plan, and has been at great pains to make this clear in advance.

But his Chinese friends do not care what he wants. They know what he ought to want, and what he shall have, which is an appropriate salutation for his New Year. Even while these remarks are committed to paper, the Chinese servants of the family, who have (unfortunately) just made the discovery that it is the foreign New Year, have furnished a timely illustration of this national characteristic, by appearing in a body to "salute the year" at 4.05 in the afternoon! Not essentially different was the liberal-conservatism of a native pundit in the writer's employ, who apologized in advance for calling upon his patrons three days after the Chinese New Year, on the ground that the elegant (borrowed) garment in which he was to appear, would be in use during the first three days by the proper owner!

The fixed resolution to do certain acts in certain ways, and in no other, is not peculiar to China. The coolies in India habitually carried burden upon their heads, and applied the same principle to the removal of earth for railways. When the contractors substituted wheelbarrows, the coolies merely transferred the barrows to the tops of their skulls. The coolies in Brazil carry burdens in the same way as those of India. A foreign gentleman in the former country gave a servant a letter to be posted, and was surprised to see him put the letter on his head and weight it with a stone to keep it in place. The exact similarity of mental processes reveals a similarity of cause, and it is a cause very potent in Chinese affairs. In leads to those multiplied instances of imitativeness, with which we are all so familiar, as when the cook breaks an egg and throws it away, each time that he makes a pudding, because on the first occasion when he was shown how to make a pudding an egg happened to be bad; or when the tailor puts a patch on a new garment, because an old one given him as a measure, chanced to be thus decorated. Stories of this sort are doubtless often meant as harmless exaggerations of a Chinese characteristic, but they represent the reality with great fidelity.

Every one acquainted with Chinese habits will be able to adduce instances of a devotion to precedent, which seems to us unaccountable, and which really is so, until we apprehend the postulate which underlies the act. In a country which stretches through some twenty-five degrees of latitude, but in which winter

furs are taken off, and straw hats are put on, according to a fixed rule for the whole Empire, it would be strange if precedent were not a kind of divinity. In regions where the only heat in the houses during the cold winter, comes from the scanty fire under the "stove-bed," or *k'ang*, it is not uncommon for travellers who have been caught in a sudden "cold snap," to find that no arguments can induce the landlord of the inn to heat the *k'ang* because the season for heating the *k'ang* has not arrived! The reluctance of Chinese artificers to adopt new methods is sufficiently well-known to all, but perhaps few even of these conservatives are more conservative than the head of the company of workmen employed to burn bricks in a kiln which, with all that appertained thereto, was the property of foreigners, and not of those who worked it. As there was occasion to use a kind of square bricks larger than those which happened to be in the fashion in that region, the foreigner ordered larger ones to be made. All that was necessary for this purpose, was simply the preparation of a wooden tray, the size of the required brick, to be used as a mould. When the bricks were wanted they were not forthcoming, and the foreman, to whom the orders had been given, being called to account for his neglect, refused to be a party to any such innovation, adducing as his all sufficient reason, the affirmation that *under the whole heavens, there is no such mould as this!*

The bearing of the subject of conservatism upon the relation of foreigners to China and the Chinese is not likely to be lost sight of for a moment, by anyone whose lot is cast in China, and who has the smallest interest in the future welfare of this mighty Empire. The last quarter of the nineteenth century seems destined to be a critical period in Chinese history. A great deal of very new wine is offered to the Chinese, who have no other provision for its reception, than a varied assortment of very old wine-skins. Thanks to the instinctive conservatism of the Chinese nature, very little of the new wine has thus far been accepted, and for that little, new bottles are in course of preparation. The present attitude of China toward the lands of the West is an attitude of procrastination. There is on the one hand, small desire for that which is new, and upon the other, no desire at all, nor even willingness to give up the old. As we see ancient mud

huts that ought long ago to have reverted to their native earth, shored up with clumsy mud pillars which but postpone the inevitable fall, so we behold old customs, old superstitions, and old faith now outworn, propped up and made to do the same duty as heretofore. "If the old does not go, the new does not come," we are told, and not without truth. The process of change from the one to the other may long be resisted, and may then come about suddenly. At a time when it was first proposed to introduce telegrams, the Governor-General of a maritime province reported to the Emperor that the hostility of the people to the innovation was so great, that the wires could not be put up. But when war with France was imminent, and the construction of the line was put upon an entirely different basis, the provincial authorities promptly set up the telegraph wires, and saw that they were respected. Ten years ago, the superstition of *fêng-shui* was believed by many to be an almost insuperable obstacle to the introduction of railways in China. The very first short line, constructed as an outlet for the K'ai-p'ing coal mines, passed through a large Chinese cemetery, the graves being removed to make way for it, as they would have been in England or in France. A single inspection of that bisected graveyard was sufficient to produce the conviction that *fêng-shui* could never stand before an engine, when the issue is narrowed down to a trial of strength between "wind-water" and steam. The experience gained in the recent extension of this initial line shows clearly that however financial considerations may delay the introduction of railways, geomantic superstitions are for this purpose quite inert.

The union of the conservative instinct with the capacity for invasion of precedents, is visible in important Chinese affairs. In China no principle is better settled than that when one of his parents dies, an official must retire from office. Yet against his repeated and "tearful" remonstrances, the most powerful subject in the Empire is commanded by the Throne to continue his attention to the intricate details of the most important plexus of duties to be found in the Empire, through all the years of what should have been mourning retirement after the death of his mother. No principle would seem to be more firmly established in China than that a father is the superior of his son, who must always do him reverence. Equally well established is the principle

that the Emperor is superior to all his subjects, who must always do *him* reverence. When therefore, as at present, it happens that from a collateral line is adopted a young Emperor whose father is still living, it would appear to be inevitable that the father must either commit suicide, or go into a permanent retirement. Such, it was supposed when Kuang Hsü ascended the Throne, would actually be the end of Prince Ch'un. Yet during the illness of the latter, his son, the Emperor, made repeated calls upon his subordinate-superior, the father; and some *modus vivendi* has been arrived at, since this same father holds important offices under his son.

As already remarked, the conservative instinct leads the Chinese to attach undue importance to precedent. But rightly understood, and cautiously used, this is a great safeguard for foreigners in their dealings with so sensative, so obstinate and so conservative a people. It is only necessary to imitate the Chinese method, to take things for granted, to *assume* the existence of rights which have not been expressly withheld, to defend them warily when they are assailed, *and by all means to hold on*. Thus, as in the case of the right of foreign residence in Peking, the right of foreign residence in the interior, and in many others, wise conservatism is the safest defence. The threatening reef which seemed so insuperable a barrier to navigation, once penetrated, offers upon the inner side a lagoon of peace and tranquillity, safe from the storms and breakers which vainly beat against it.

The Chinese never for an instant free themselves from the idea expressed by Napoleon, when, pointing to the pyramids, he cried to his soldiers, "Forty centuries are looking down upon you!" But when we consider in the abstract, and especially when we encounter in the concrete the embarrassments arising from Chinese determination to be consistent with the vast background of their history, most of us will sympathize with the view of a little girl who had been disputing with her brother as to which of them was born earlier in the day. The mother decided that the brother was born at two in the morning, and his sister at seven. "I don't care," was the reply, "what is the use of being born before it is time to get up?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

INDIFFERENCE TO COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE.

In what we have now to say, it must be premised at the outset, that all that is affirmed of Chinese indifference to comfort and convenience respects not Oriental but Occidental standards, the principal object being to show how totally different those standards are. Let us first direct our attention for a moment to the Chinese dress. In speaking of Chinese contempt for foreigners, we have already had occasion to mention that Western modes of apparel have very little which is attractive to the Chinese; we are now forced to admit that the converse is equally true. To us it certainly appears singular that a great nation should become reconciled to such an unnatural custom as shaving off the entire front part of the head, leaving that exposed, which nature evidently intended should be protected. But since the Chinese were driven to adopt this custom at the point of the sword, and since, as already remarked, it has become a sign and a test of loyalty, it need be no further noticed in this connection, than to call attention to the undoubted fact that the Chinese themselves do not recognize any discomfort from the practice, and would probably be exceedingly unwilling to revert to the Ming dynasty tonsure. The same considerations do not apply to the Chinese habit of going bareheaded at almost all seasons of the year, and especially in summer. The whole nation moves about in the blistering heats of the summer months, holding one arm aloft, with an open fan held at such an angle as to obstruct a portion of the rays of the sun. Those who at any part of their lives hold an umbrella in their hands to ward off heat, must constitute but a most insignificant fraction of the population. While men do often wear hats upon certain provocation, Chinese women, so far as we have observed, have no other kind of head-dress than that

which, however great its failure viewed from the unsympathetic Western stand-point, is intended to be ornamental. One of the very few requisites for comfort, according to Chinese ideas, is a fan, that is to say, in the season when it is possible to use such an accessory to comfort. It is not uncommon in the summer to see coolies, almost or quite devoid of clothing, struggling to track a heavy salt-junk up stream, vigorously fanning themselves meanwhile. Even beggars frequently brandish broken fans.

It is one of the unaccountable phenomena of Chinese civilization, that this people which is supposed to have been originally pastoral, and which certainly shows a high degree of ingenuity in making use of the gifts of nature, has never learned to weave wool in such a way as to employ it as clothing. The only exceptions to this general statement of which we are aware relate to the Western parts of the Empire, where to a certain extent woollen fabrics are manufactured. But it is most extraordinary that the art of making such goods should not have become general, in view of the great numbers of sheep which are to be seen, especially in the mountainous regions.

It is believed that in ancient times before cotton was introduced, garments were made of some other vegetable fibres, such as rushes. However this may be, it is certain that the nation as a whole is at present absolutely dependant upon cotton. In those parts of the Empire where the winter cold is severe, the people wear an amount of wadded clothing almost sufficient to double the bulk of their bodies. A child clad in this costume, if he happens to fall down, is often as utterly unable to rise, as if he had been strapped into a cask. Of the discomfort of such clumsy dress, we never hear the Chinese complain. The discomfort is in the want of it. It is certain, however, that no Anglo-Saxon would willingly tolerate the disabilities of such an attire, if he could by any possibility be relieved of it.

In connection with the heavy clothing of winter, must be mentioned the total lack of any kind of under-clothing. To us it seems difficult to support existence without woollen under-garments, frequently changed. The Chinese are conscious of no such need. Their burdensome wadded clothes hang around their bodies like so many bags, leaving yawning spaces through which the cold penetrates to the flesh, but they do not mind this circumstance,

although ready to admit that it is not ideal. Chinese shoes are made of cloth, and are always porous, absorbing moisture on the smallest provocation. This keeps the feet more or less chilled all the time, whenever the weather is cold. The Chinese have, indeed, a kind of oiled boots which are designed to keep out the dampness, but like many other conveniences, the use of them, on account of the expense, is restricted to a very few. The same is true of umbrellas as a protection against rain. They are luxuries, and are by no means regarded as necessities. Chinese who are obliged to be exposed to the weather do not as a rule think it important, certainly not necessary, to change their clothes when they have become thoroughly wet, and do not seem to find the inconvenience of allowing their garments to dry upon them, at all a serious one. While the Chinese admire foreign gloves, they have none of their own, and while clumsy mittens are not unknown, even in the extreme north they are rarely seen.

One of the most annoying characteristics of Chinese costume, as seen from the foreign stand-point, is the absence of pockets. The average westerner requires a great number of these to meet his needs. He demands breast pockets in his coats for his memorandum books, pockets behind for his handkerchiefs, pockets in his vest for pencil, tooth-pick, etc., as well as for his watch, and in other accessible positions for the accommodation of his pocket-knife, his bunch of keys, and his wallet. If the foreigner is also provided with a pocket comb, a folding foot-rule, a cork-screw, a boot-buttoner, a pair of tweezers, a minute compass, a folding pair of scissors, a pinball, a pocket mirror and a fountain pen, it will not mark him out as a singular exception to his race. Having become accustomed to the constant use of these articles, he cannot dispense with them. The Chinese, on the other hand, has few or none of such things; if he were presented with them, he would not know where to put them. If he has a handkerchief, it is thrust into his bosom, and so also is a child which he may have to carry around. If he has a paper of some importance, he carefully unties the strap which confines his trousers to his ancle, inserts the paper, and goes on his way. If he wears outside drawers, he simply tucks in the paper without untying anything. In either case, if the band loosens without his knowledge, the

paper is lost—a constant occurrence. Other depositaries of such articles are the folds of the long sleeves when turned back, the crown of a turned-up hat, or the space between the cap and the head. Many Chinese make a practice of ensuring a convenient, although somewhat exiguous supply of ready money, by always striking a cash in one ear. The main dependence for security of articles carried is the girdle, to which a small purse, the tobacco pouch and pipe, and similar objects are attached. If the girdle work loose, the articles are liable to be lost Keys, moustache combs, and a few ancient cash, are attached to some prominent button of the jacket, and each removal of this garment involves care-taking to prevent the loss of the appendages.

If the daily dress of the ordinary Chinese seems to us objectionable, his nocturnal costume is at least free from criticism on the score of complexity, for he simply strips to the skin, wraps himself in his quilt, and sleeps the sleep of the just. Night-dress he or she has none. It is indeed recorded that Confucius "required his sleeping-dress to be half as long again as his body." It is supposed, however, that the reference in this passage is to a robe which the master wore when he was fasting, and not to an ordinary night-dress; but it is at all events certain that modern Chinese do not imitate him in his night-robe, and do not fast if they can avoid it. Even new-born babes, whose skins are exceedingly sensitive to the least changes of temperature, are carelessly laid under the bed-clothes, which are thrown back whenever the mother wishes to exhibit the infant to spectators. The sudden chill which this absurd practice occasions is thought by competent judges to be quite sufficient to account for the very large number of Chinese who before completing the first month of their existence, die in convulsions. When children have grown larger, instead of being provided with diapers, they are in some regions clad in a pair of bifurcated bags, partly filled with sand, the mere idea of which is sufficient to fill the breast of tender-hearted Western mothers with horror. Weighted with these strange equipments, the poor thing is at first rooted to one spot, like the frog which was "loaded" with buck shot. In the particular districts where this custom prevails, it is common to speak of a person who exhibits small practical knowledge, as one who has not yet been taken out of his "earth-trousers!"

Chinese indifference to what we mean by comfort, is exhibited as much in their houses as in their dress. In order to establish this proposition, it is necessary to take account not of the dwellings of the poor, who are forced to exist as they can, but rather of the habitations of those whose circumstances enable them to do as they please. The Chinese do not care for the shade of trees about their houses, but much prefer poles covered with mats. Those who are unable to afford such a luxury, however, and who might easily have a grateful shade-tree in their court-yard, do not plant anything of this sort, but content themselves with pomegranates or some other merely ornamental shrubs. When, owing to the fierce heat, the yard is intolerable, they go and sit in the street, and when that is insufferable, they retire to their houses again. Few houses have a north door opposite the main entrance on the south side. Such an arrangement would produce a draught, and somewhat diminish the miseries of the dog-days. When asked why such a convenience is not more common, the frequent reply is that "*we do not have north doors!*" North of the thirty-seventh parallel of latitude, the common sleeping-place of the Chinese is the *k'ang*, a raised "brick-bed" composed of adobe bricks, and heated by the fire use for cooking. If there happens to be no fire, the cold earth appears to a foreigner the acme of discomfort. If the fire happens to be too great, he wakes in the latter part of the night, feeling that he is undergoing a process of roasting. In any event, the degree of heat will not be continuous throughout the night. The whole family is huddled together on this terrace. The material of which it is composed becomes infested with insects, and even if the adobe bricks are annually removed, there is no way to secure immunity from these unwelcome guests, which are fixed occupants of the walls of all classes of dwellings.

Foreign familiarity with Chinese parasites does not tend to induce toleration of them, as it has done in the case of the Chinese. A foreign lady who was in the room with a company of Chinese women, met a specimen of the *pediculus capitis* which had apparently lost its way. Holding it up, the lady inquired earnestly, "*Whose louse is this?*"

Other universally prevalent animal infestations there are, with which most Chinese are very familiar, but there are few who seem to regard parasities as a preventible evil, even if they are

recognized as an evil at all. The nets which are used to keed winged torments at bay, are beyond the means of all but a minute fraction even of the city population, and so far as we know are rarely heard of elsewhere. Sandflies and mosquitoes are indeed felt to be a serious nuisance, and occasionally faint efforts are made to expel them by burning aromatic weeds, but these pests do not annoy the Chinese a thousandth part as much as they annoy us.

One of the typical instances of different standards of comfort between ourselves and the Chinese is in the conception of what a pillow ought to be. In Western lands, a pillow is a bag of feathers, adjusted to support the head. In China a pillow is a support for the neck, either a small stool of bamboo, a block of wood, or more commonly a brick. No Occidental could use a Chinese pillow in a Chinese way without torture, and it is not less certain that no Chinese would tolerate under his head for ten minutes the bags which we use for that purpose. We have spoken of the singular fact that the Chinese do not to any extent weave wool. It is still more unaccountable that they take no apparent interest in the feathers which they pluck in such vast quantities from the fowls which they consume. It would be exceedingly easy to make up wadded bedding, by employing feathers as lining, and the cost of the feathers would be little or nothing, since they are allowed to blow away as beyond the use even of the strict economy of the Chinese. Yet aside from sale to foreigners, we do not know of any use to which such feathers are at present put, except that the larger ones are loosely tied to sticks to serve as dusters.

To an Occidental, the ideal bed is at once elastic and firm. The best example of such is perhaps that made from what is known as "woven wire," which in recent years has come into such general use. But when one of the finest hospitals in China was furnished with these luxurious appliances, the kind-hearted physician who had planned for them, was disgusted to find that as soon as his back was turned, those patients who were strong enough to do so, crawled from their elastic beds, down upon the floor, where they felt at home!

Chinese houses are nearly always ill-lighted at night. The native vegetable oils are exceedingly disagreeable to the smell,

and only afford sufficient illumination to make darkness visible. The great advantages of kerosene are indeed recognized, but in spite of them, it is still true that throughout enormous areas, the oil made from beans, cotton seed and peanuts continues to be used, long after kerosene has been known, simply from the force of conservative *inertia*, backed by profound indifference to the greater comfort of being able to see clearly, as compared with being able to see scarcely at all. Chinese furniture strikes a Westerner as being clumsy and uncomfortable. Instead of the broad benches on which our ancestors used to recline, the Chinese are generally content with very narrow ones, and it will not be surprising if some of the legs are loose, or are so placed as to tip off the unwary person who seats himself when there is no one at the other end.

Dr. Williams remarks that the Chinese are the only Asiatic nation using chairs, but according to our ideas, Chinese chairs are models of discomfort. Some of them are made on a pattern which prevailed in England in the days of Queen Elizabeth or Queen Anne, tall, straight of back, and inordinately angular. The more common ones are shaped so as to accommodate persons who weigh about two hundred and fifty pounds, but the strength of the chairs is by no means proportioned to the magnitude, and they soon fall to pieces.

The greatest objections which Westerners have to Chinese dwellings are undoubtedly the dampness and the cold. Of the radical error in the construction of building, which economizes in the foundation, we have elsewhere spoken. The enevitable and permanent result is dampness. Floors of earth, or of imperfectly burned brick are to most foreigners not only sources of great discomfort, but extremely prejudicial to health. Not less annoying are the loose doors, resting on pivots. The double leaves of these doors admit the cold air at each side, at the top and at the bottom. Even if the cracks are pasted up with stout paper, a door is but an imperfect protection against the bitter winter weather, because no one will shut it. It is almost impossible to teach Chinese to keep an outside door shut in winter. The notice which a business man posted on the outside of his office door, "Everybody shuts the doors but you," would be a gross falsehood in China, where nobody shuts a door.

A Chinese dwelling in winter always appears to a Westerner a *thesaurus* of discomfort, on account of the absence of artificial heat. The vast majority of the people, even where the winters are severe, have no other heat than that modicum obtained from the fuel burned in cooking, and which is conveyed to the *k'ang*. This is the point of minimum discomfort in the establishment, but to Occidentals who wish to feel positive heat from some source diffusing itself in grateful currents all over the body, a Chinese *k'ang* on a cold night, is a very inadequate substitute for the "chimney-corner," or for the stove. In regions where coal is accessible, it is indeed employed as fuel, but as compared with the whole country, these districts are very limited, and the smoke always escapes into the room, which becomes gradually filled with carbonic acid gas. Charcoal is very sparingly used even by those who are in good circumstances, and the danger from its incautious use, like that from the use of coal is very great. The houses are so uncomfortable that even at home if the weather is cold the inmates often wear all the clothes they can put on. When abroad, they have no more to add. "Are you cold?" we ask them. "Of course," is the constant reply. They have never been artificially warmed in an Occidental sense, during their whole lives. In the winter their blood seems to be like water in the rivers, congealed at the surface, and only moving with a sluggish current underneath. Considering these characteristics of Chinese dwellings, it is no wonder that a certain Taotai who had been abroad, remarked that in the United States the prisoners in jail had quarters more comfortable than his yamên.

In speaking of the Chinese absence of nerves we have already had occasion to point out the Chinese indifference to crowding and noise. As soon as the weather becomes cold, the Chinese huddle together as a matter of course, in order to keep warm. Even in the depth of the dog-days, it is not uncommon to see boats loaded with such numbers of passengers that there must be barely room to sit or to lie. No Westerners would tolerate such crowding, yet the Chinese do not appear to mind it. Occidentals like to have their dwellings at a little distance from those of the nearest neighbours, for ventilation and for privacy. The Chinese know nothing either of ventilation or of privacy, and they do not seem to appreciate these conditions when they are

realized.* Every little Chinese village is built on the plan of a city without any plan. In other words, the dwellings are huddled together as if land were excessively valuable. The inevitable effect is to raise the price of land, just as in a city, though for quite different reasons. Hence narrow courts, cramped accommodations, unhealthful overcrowding, even where there is abundant space to be had close at hand and at a moderate rate.

A Chinese guest at a Chinese inn enjoys the bustle which is concomitant upon the arrival of a long train of carts, and falls asleep as soon as he has bolted his evening meal. His fellow traveller from western climes lies awake half the night, listening to the champing of three score mules, varied by kicks and squeals that last as long as he keeps his consciousness. These sounds are alternated by the beating of a huge wooden rattle, and by the yelping of a large force of dogs. It is not uncommon to see as many as fifty donkeys in one inn-yard, and the pandemonium which they occasion at night can be but faintly imagined. The Chinese are not unaware, as M. Huc has mentioned, that the braying of this animal can be stopped by suspending a brick to its tail, but repeated enquiries fail to elicit information of a single instance in which the thing has been actually done. The explanation is simply that a Chinese does not particularly care whether fifty donkeys bray singly, simultaneously, or not at all. No Occidental would be likely to remain neutral on such a question. That this feeling is not confined to any particular stratum of the Chinese social scale, might be inferred from the circumstance that the wife of the leading statesman of China had at one time in the vice-regal yamên about one hundred cats!

* Many Chinese, who live all their lives in dwellings, in which the sensitive foreigners, like Coleridge in Cologne, might count "two and seventy stenches, all well-defined, and several stinks," are yet much annoyed at many odours which they encounter in foreign houses. They are not extremely disgusted with the smell of kerosene (which perhaps is not surprising), but they frequently manifest repugnance to what we consider our most fragrant flowers. A foreign lady who had kindly gathered up from their dirty and repulsive homes, a few neglected Chinese girls, and brought them into her own sitting-room to learn to read, found them one day holding their noses, because the house was pervaded with an odour of fresh roasted coffee, which they declared to be "a horrid smell!" We have heard of a Chinese nurse-woman, who emphatically declined to sleep in the same ship-cabin with the children under her care, on the ground that they "smelly all same sheep!"

The Buddhist religion is responsible for the reluctance of the Chinese to put an end to the wretched existence of the pariah dogs with which all Chinese cities are infested, yet the trait of character thus exhibited is not so much Chinese as Oriental. Mr. J. Ross Browne, who was once Minister from the United States to China, published an entertaining volume of travels in the East, adorned with drawings of his own. One of these represented what appeared to be a congress of all varieties of lean and mangy dogs, which was offered as "a general view of Constantinople." The same cut would do good service as a sketch of many Chinese cities. The Chinese do not appear to experience any serious discomfort from the reckless and irrepressible barking of this vast army of curs, nor do they take much account of the really great dangers arising from mad dogs, which are not infrequently encountered. Under such circumstances, the remedy adopted is often that of binding some of the hair of the dog into the wound which it has caused, a curious analogy to the practice which must have originated our proverb that "the hair of the same dog will cure." The death of the dog does not seem to be any part of the object in view.

Most of the instances already adduced relate to Chinese indifference to comfort. It would not be difficult to cite as many more which bear upon disregard of convenience, but a few examples will be sufficient. The Chinese pride themselves upon being a literary nation, in fact *the* literary nation of the world. Pens, paper, ink, and ink-slabs are called the "four precious things," and their presence constitutes a "literary apartment." It is remarkable that not one of these four indispensable articles is carried about the person. They are by no means sure to be at hand when wanted, and all four of them are utterly useless without a fifth substance, to wit, water, which is required for rubbing up the ink. The pen cannot be used without considerable previous manipulation to soften its delicate hairs, it is very liable to be injured by inexpert handling, and lasts but a comparatively short time. The Chinese have no substitute for the pen, such as lead pencils, nor if they had them, would they be able to keep them in repair, since they have no pen-knives, and no pockets in which to carry them. We have previously endeavoured, in speaking of the economy of the Chinese, to do justice to their

great skill in accomplishing excellent results with very inadequate means, but it is not the less true that such labour saving devices as are so constantly met in Western lands, are unknown in China. In a modern hotel in the Occident, one has but to push something or to pull something and he gets whatever he wants—hot or cold water, lights, heat, service. But the finest hostelry in the eighteen provinces, like all inferior places of accommodation, obliges its guest, whenever he is conscious of an unsupplied need, to go to the outer door of his apartment, and yell at the top of his voice, vainly hoping to be heard for his much speaking.

Many articles constantly required by the Chinese are not to be had on demand, but only when the dealer in the same happens to make his irregular appearance. At all other times, one might as well find himself dropped in the interior of the Soudan, so far as the supply of current wants is concerned. In the city everyone carries a lantern at night, yet in some cities at least, lanterns are to be had only when the peddler brings them around, and those who want them buy at such times, as we do of a milk-man, or a dealer in fresh yeast. That percentage of the whole population which lives in Chinese cities cannot be a large one, and in the country this limitation of traffic is the rule and not the exception. In some districts, for example, it is customary to sell timber for house building in the second moon, and the same logs are often dragged about the country from one large fair to another, till they are either sold, or taken back to their point of departure. But should any inexperienced person be so rash as to wish to buy timber in the fifth moon, he will soon ascertain why the wisest of Orientals remarked that "there is a time to every purpose under the heaven."

Few inconveniences of the Celestial Empire make upon the Western mind a more speedy and a more indelible impression, than the entire absence of "sanitation." Whenever there has been an attempt made to accomplish something in the way of drainage, as in Peking, the resultant evils are very much greater than those which they were designed to cure. No matter how long one has lived in China, he remains in a condition of mental suspense, unable to decide that most interesting question, so often raised, which is the filthiest city in the Empire? A visitor from one of the northern provinces, boasted to a resident in Amoy,

that in offensiveness to the senses, no city in south China could equal those of the north. With a view to decide this moot point, the city of Amoy was extensively traversed, and found to be unexpectedly clean—that is, for a Chinese city. Jealous for the pre-eminence of his adopted home, the Amoy resident claimed that he was taken at a disadvantage, as a heavy rain had recently done much to wash the streets! The traveller thinks he has found the worst Chinese city when he has inspected Foochow, he is certain of it when he visits Ningpo, and doubly are on arriving in Tientsin. Yet after all, it will not be strange if he heartily recants when he reviews with candour and impartiality the claims of Peking!

The three points upon which the Occidental mind is sure to lay principal stress when contemplating the inconveniences of Chinese civilization, are the absence of postal facilities, the state of the roads, and the conditions of the currency. Private companies do of course exist, by which letters and parcels may be transmitted from certain places in China to certain other places, but their functions are exceedingly limited, and compared with the whole Empire, the areas which they accommodate are but trifling. Of Chinese roads we have already spoken, when discussing the absence of public spirit. It is because the Chinese costume —especially Chinese shoes—is what has been described, and because Chinese roads are what we know them to be, that whenever the weather is bad the Chinese confine themselves to their dwellings. In Western lands, we speak of an unintelligent person, as one who does not know enough to go in when it rains, but in China one should rather say of such a person that he does not know enough to stay in when it rains.

One of the most common characters in the Chinese language, used to denote *imperative necessity*, is composed of two parts which signify, "stopped by the rain." With the possible exception of official service, the idea that any human being has functions the discharge of which can be harmonized with the rapid precipitation of moisture in the outer atmosphere, is one that can only be introduced to most Chinese skulls, by a process of trepanning. Not even public business is necessarily urgent, the proverb to the contrary notwithstanding. We have heard of a Chinese fort, of undoubted strength, in a most important position, armed with

the most elaborate muniments of war such as Krupp guns, and provided with foreign drilled troops, where on occasion of a rain, everyone of the sentries judiciously retired to the guard-houses, leaving not a single man anywhere in sight. They were "stopped by the rain!" The Tientsin massacre of 1870 might have been quadrupled in atrocity, but for a timely rain, which deterred the desperadoes already on their way to the Settlement. A portable shower would be one of the most perfect defences which a foreign traveller in the hostile parts of China could desire. We are confident that a steady stream of cold water delivered from a two inch nozzle, within five minutes of solar time, would disperse the most violent mob ever seen by a foreigner in China. Grape shot would be far less effectual, for many would stop to gather up the spent shot, while cold water is something for which every Chinese from the Han dynasty downwards, entertains the same aversion as does a cat. Externally or internally administered, he regards it as equally fatal.

The Chinese has learned to accommodate himself to his environment. To such inconveniences as he encounters he submits with exemplary patience, because he well knows them to be inevitable.

The subject of Chinese currency demands not a brief paragraph, but a comprehensive essay, or rather a volume. Its chaotic eccentricities would drive any Occidental nation to madness in a single generation, or more probable such gigantic evils would speedily work their own cure. In speaking of the disregard of accuracy we have mentioned a few of the more prominent annoyances. A hundred cash are not a hundred, and a thousand cash are not a thousand, but some other and totally uncertain number, to be ascertained only by experience. In wide regions of the Empire, one cash counts for two, that is, it does so in numbers above twenty, so that when one hears that he is to be paid five hundred cash he understands that he will receive two hundred and fifty pieces, less the local abatement, which perpetually shifts in different places. There is a constant intermixture of small or spurious cash, leading to inevitable disputes between dealers in any commodity. At irregular intervals, the local magistrates become impressed with the evil of this debasement of the currency, and issue stern proclamations against it. This

gives the swarm of underlings in the magistrate's yamên an opportunity to levy squeezes on all the cash shops in the districts, and to make the transaction of all business more of less difficult. Prices at once rise, to meet the temporary necessity for pure cash. As soon as the paying ore in this vein is exhausted, and it is not worked to any extent, the bad cash returns, but prices do not fall. Thus the irrepressible law by which the worse currency drives out the better, is never for an instant suspended. The condition of the cash becomes worse and worse, until as in some parts of the province of Honan, everyone goes to market with two entirely distinct sets of cash, one of each is the ordinary mixture of good with bad, and the other is composed exclusively of counterfeit pieces. Certain articles are paid for with the spurious cash only. But in regard to other commodities this is matter of special bargain, and accordingly there is for these articles a double market price. That enormous losses must result from such a state of things, is to any Westerner obvious at a glance, although the Chinese are so accustomed to inconveniences of this sort, that they seem almost unconscious of their existence, and the evils are felt only as the pressure of the atmosphere is felt. Chinese cash is emphatically "filthy lucre." It cannot be handled without contamination. The strings, of five hundred or a thousand (nominal) pieces, are exceedingly liable to break, which involves great trouble in recounting and re-tying. There is no uniformity of weight in the current copper cash, but all is both bulky and heavy. Cash to the value of a Mexican dollar weigh not less than eight pounds avoirdupois. A few hundred cash are all that anyone can carry about in the little bags which are suspended for this purpose from the girdle. If it is desired to use a larger sum than a few strings, the transportation become a serious matter. The losses on transactions in ingots of sycee are always great, and the person who uses them is inevitably cheated both in buying and in selling. If he employs the bills of cash-shops, the difficulty is not greatly relieved, since those of one region are either wholly uncurrent in another region not far away, or will be taken only at a heavy discount, while the person who at last takes them to be redeemed, has in prospect a certain battle with the harpies of the shop by which the bills were issued, as to the quality of the cash which is to be paid for them. Under these

grave disabilities the wonder is that the Chinese are able to do any business at all; and yet, as we daily perceive, they are so accustomed to these annoyances, that their burden appears scarcely felt, and the only serious complaint on this score comes from foreigners.

It is very common for the traveller through a Chinese village, to see a donkey lying at full length, and attached to a post by a strong strap passed about his neck. But instead of adjusting himself to the length of his strap, the beast frequently drags himself to the utmost limit of his tether, and reclines with his head at an angle of forty-five degrees, his neck stretched in such a way as to threaten the dislocation of this cervical vertebræ. We wonder why he does not break his neck, and still more what pleasure there can be in the apparent attempt to do so. No Occidental donkey would behave in such a way. The reader who has followed us thus far, through these inadequate illustrations of our topic, will bear in mind that the Chinese race, though apparently in a condition of semi-strangulation, seems to itself comparatively comfortable, which is but to say that the Chinese standard of comfort and convenience, and the standard to which we are accustomed, are widely variant, which is the proposition with which we began.

It is not unusual to hear persons who have considerable acquaintance with the Chinese and their ways, especially in the aspects to which our attention has just been drawn, affirm that the Chinese are not civilized! This very superficial and erroneous judgment is due to an unphilosophical confounding of civilization and comfort. In considering the present condition of China, which is much what it was three centuries ago, it is well to look upon the changes through which we ourselves have passed, for thus only can we arrive at a just comparison. We cannot think of the England of Milton, Shakespeare and Elizabeth as an uncivilized country, but nothing is more certain than that to the most of us it would now prove to be a most intolerable residence. Mr. John Richard Green, who has done so much to elucidate the history of the English people, was the first to remark that it is from the reign of Elizabeth that we date the rise of that conception which now seems to us a peculiarly English one, the conception of domestic comfort. The baronial lords with their followers,

inhabited dreary keeps, in dirt and darkness. The doors were ill-fitting. The window-shutters yawned, and let in the wind. Coal was little known in the fifteenth century, and the great baronial hall had in the middle a huge fire of billets and brushwood. Often the smoke was allowed to escape through a hole in the roof. The floor was strewn with rushes. Noble lords and ladies ate with their fingers, threw the bones on the floor under the table, and let the dogs nose about for them. The filth which thus accumulated frequently became very offensive before the floor was swept. In the country the scarcity of fuel often made the mud-built cottages, in which chimneys were rare, miserably cold in winter. The thatched cottages of the towns were often on fire, and the rapid destruction of whole streets produced the greatest misery, when the protection of fire insurance was unknown. It appears from the Paston letters, that such an article as a small feather bed was thought a proper object of bequest in a will. Common utensils were transmitted from generation to generation, one worthy burgess thus leaving "a great earthen pot that was my mother's." Wives had a life interest in "stuff of household," which was bequeathed to descend, after the decease of the wife, article by article, to relatives and friends. The riches so handed down are such as a pottle pot and a quart pot, a pair of tongs and a bellows. Hats were a French invention which did not come into use in England, till the middle of the fifteenth century. Umbrellas were long ridiculed, as a mark of effeminacy. The merchant who travelled from fair to fair, and the pilgrim, were the only bearers of news. There was small communication between one part of the kingdom and another, and men abode from chilhood to old age in the narrow circle in which they were born. In the days before turnpikes, a cart of four horses, engaged for six days, was obliged by the shocking condition of the roads to rest four days out of six. The mire was so tenacious, that we read of the shoes of the horses being so constantly dragged from their feet, that it was necessary to have a smith or farrier attend a party of horsemen, taking a large stock of shoes and nails. It was not till the middle of the fourteenth century that the hotel or tavern had its origin. Travellers were warmed by a fire of brushwood, and found a bed on a heap of straw. The banks of the Thames were slimy with mud at low tide, and the river was

the place of deposit of the offal of the city. The streets of London were unpaved, damp, and even in dry weather, dirty. They were full of filth and garbage. Kites and ravens were cherished as scavengers, and when the odours became too offensive, bonfires were kindled to avert the plague which was generally lurking in the alleys and corners of the city.

It is superfluous to allude to the manifold and complex causes which have brought about such astonishing changes in the British Islands within the past three centuries. Yet more wonderful is the radical revolution which within the last fifty years has taken place in the standard of comfort and convenience. If we were compelled to return to the crude ways of our great-grandfathers, and grandfathers, it might be a question whether life for us would be worth living. Times have changed, and we have changed with them. In China, on the contrary, times have not changed, and neither have the people. The standard of comfort and convenience is the same now as it has been for centuries. When new conditions arise, these standards will inevitably alter. That they will ever be the same as those to which we have become accustomed, is however, to be neither expected nor desired.

CHAPTER XXX.

PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE.

THE term patience embraces three quite different meanings. It is the act or quality of expecting long, without complaint, anger or discontent. It is the power or the act of suffering or bearing quietly or with equanimity any evil—calm endurance. It is also employed as a synonym of perseverance. That the group of qualities to which reference is here made has a very important bearing on the life of the people to whom they belong, is obvious at a glance. The disadvantage arising from a separate and a distinct examination of individual Chinese characteristics is nowhere more obvious than in the consideration of the qualities of patience and perseverance. These characteristics of the Chinese are inseparably connected with their comparative "absence of nerves," with their "disregard of time," and especially with that quality of "industry," by which the national patience and perseverance are most conspicuously and most effectively illustrated. What has been already said upon these topics will have served to suggest one of the chief virtues in the Chinese character, but the necessarily desultory treatment involved in such incidental mention, deserves to be supplemented by a more comprehensive presentation.

Among a dense population like that of the Chinese Empire, life is often reduced to its very lowest terms, and those terms are literally a "struggle for existence." In order to live, it is necessary to have the means of leaving, and those means each must obtain for himself, as best he can. Deep poverty and a hard struggle for the means of existence will of themselves never make any human being industrious, but if a man or a race is endowed with the instinct of industry, these are the conditions which will tend most effectually to develop industry. The same conditions will

also tend to the development of economy, which, as we have seen, is a prominent Chinese quality. These conditions also develop patience and perseverance. The hunter and the fisherman who know that their livelihood depends upon the stealth and wariness of their movements, and the patience with which they wait for their opportunity, will be stealthy, wary and patient, no matter whether they happen to belong to the races of mankind classed as "civilized," to those called "semi-civilized," or to those known as "savage." The Chinese are a race who for ages have been hunting for a living under conditions frequently the most adverse, and they have thus learned to combine the active industry of the most civilized peoples with the passive patience of the North American Indian.

The Chinese are willing to labour for a very long period of time, for very small rewards, because small rewards are much better than none. Ages of experience have taught them that it is very difficult to make industry a stepping stone to those wider opportunities which we of the West have come to look upon as the natural results. They are "natural" results, only in the sense that when appropriate conditions are found, these results will follow. A population of five hundred to the square mile, it is scarcely necessary to observe, is not one of the conditions adapted to lead to practical verification of the adage that industry and economy are the two hands of fortune. But the Chinese is content to toil on for such rewards as he may be able to get, and in this contentment, he illustrates his virtue of patience. It is related of the late General Grant, that on his return from that trip round the globe in which it is supposed that he was seen by more human beings than any other single individual had ever been, he was asked what was the most remarkable thing that he saw. He replied at once, that the most extraordinary sight which he anywhere beheld, was the spectacle of a petty Chinese dealer by his keen compitition running out a Jew. There was great significance in the observation: The qualities of Jewish people are by this time well-known, and have led to most surprising results, but the Jews are after all but a minute fraction of the human race. The Chinese, on the other hand, are a considerable percentage of the whole population of the planet. The Jew who was run out by the Chinese, did not presumptively differ in any

essential respect from any other Jew. The result of the competition would probably have been the same, though the competitors had been different in their identity, for it is morally certain that the successful Chinese did not differ in any essential particular from millions of other Chinese who might have chanced to be in his situation. It is in his *staying qualities* that the Chinese excels the world. Of that quiet persistence which impels a Chinese student to keep on year after year attending the examinations, until he either takes his degree at the age of ninety, or dies in the effort, mention has been already made. No rewards that are likely to ensue, nor any that are possible, will of themselves account for this extraordinary perseverance. It is a part of that innate endowment with which the Chinese are equipped, and is analogous to the fleetness of the deer, or the keen sight of the eagle. A similar quality is observed in the meanest beggar at a shop door. He is not a welcome visitor, albeit so frequent in his appearances. But his patience is unfailing, and his perseverance invariably wins its modest reward, a single brass cash.

There is a story of an Arab whose turban was stolen by some unknown person, upon which the loser of this important article of apparel promptly betook himself to the tribal burial place and seated himself at the entrance. Upon being asked his reason for this strange behaviour, and why he did not pursue the thief, he made the calm and characteristically Oriental reply, "He must come here at last!" One is not infrequently reminded of this exaggeration of passive persistence, not only in the behaviour of individual Chinese, but in the acts of the government as well. The long and splendid reign of the Emperor K'ang Hsi, lasting from 1662 until 1723, made his name more celebrated than that of any other Asiatic monarch. Yet it was in the reign of this greatest of Chinese rulers, that the Chinese patriotic pirate Ching Ching-kung, better known under the name of Koxinga, ravaged the coasts of the provinces of Kuangtung and Fukien to such a degree that the government junks were totally unable to cope with him. Under these circumstances, K'ang Hsi hit upon the happy expedient of ordering all the people inhabiting this extended coast line, to retire into the interior to a distance of thirty *li*, or about nine miles, at which point they were inaccessible even to

such stout attacks as this adherent of the old order of things was able to make. This strange command was generally obeyed, and was quite successful in accomplishing its design. Koxinga retired, baffled in his plans, and contented himself with driving the Dutch out of Formosa, and was eventually ennobled under the title of the "Sea-quelling Duke," by which means he was at once pacified and extinguished. Every foreigner reading this singular account is impelled to assent to the comment of the author of the *Middle Kingdom*, that a government which was strong enough to compel such a number of maritime subjects to leave their towns and villages, and to retire at such great loss into the interior, ought to have been strong enough to equip a fleet and to put an end to the attacks upon these desolated homes.

Another example of the persistence of the Chinese government is not less remarkable, and is still fresh in the minds of foreign residents in China. In the year 1873, the Chinese General Tso Tsung-tang established himself in Barkoul and Hami, having been sent by the government to endeavour to put a stop to the great Mohammedan rebellion, which, beginning with a mere spark, had spread like wildfire all over Western China, and through Central Asia. The difficulties to be overcome were so great as to appear almost insuperable. It was then common to meet with articles in the foreign press in China, ridiculing both the undertaking of Tso, and the fatuity of the government in endeavouring to raise money by loans, in order to pay the heavy war expenses thus incurred. Within a year of his arrival in the rebellious districts, Tso's army was marching on either side of the lofty T'ien-shan in parallel columns, driving the rebels before them. When they reached a country in which the supplies were insufficient, the army was turned into a farming colony and set to cultivating the soil with a view to raising crops for their future support. Thus alternately planting and marching, the "agricultural army" of Tso thoroughly accomplished its work, an achievement which has been thought to be among "the most remarkable in the annals of any modern country."

It remains to speak of that quality of Chinese patience, which to us seems the most noteworthy of all—its capacity to wait without complaint, and to bear with calm endurance. It has been

said that the true way to test the real disposition of a human being is to study his behaviour when he is cold, wet and hungry. If that is satisfactory, take the individual in question, "warm him, dry him, and fill him up, and you have an angel." There is an impression which often finds expression in current literature that it is as dangerous to meet an Englishman who is deprived of his dinner, as a she bear robbed of her cubs, and it is not easy to perceive why the truth which underlies this statement is not as applicable to all Anglo-Saxons as to the inhabitants of the British Isles. With all our boasted civilization, we are under bondage to our stomachs. The writer once saw about one hundred and fifty Chinese, most of whom had come several miles in order to be present at a feast, meet a cruel disappointment. Instead of being able as was expected to sit down at about ten o'clock to the feast, which was for many of them the first meal of the day, owing to a combination of unforeseen circumstances, they were compelled to stand aside, and act as waiters on about as many more individuals who ate with that relish and deliberation which is a trait of Chinese civilization in which it is far in advance of our own. Before the meal for which they had so long and so patiently waited could be served, another delay became necessary, as unforeseen as the first, and far more exasperating. What did these hundred and fifty outraged persons do? If they had been inhabitants of the British Isles, or even of some other portions of "nominally Christian lands," we know very well what they would have done. They would have worn looks of sour discontent, and would have spent the entire day, until three o'clock in the afternoon, when it was at last possible to sit down, in growling at their luck, and in snarling at their environment generally. They would have passed fiery resolutions, and have written a letter with five "Now, Sirs," to the *London Times.* The hundred and fifty Chinese did nothing whatever of the sort, and were not only good tempered all day, but repeatedly observed to their hosts with evident sincerity and with true politeness, that it was of no consequence whatever that they had to wait, and that one time was to them exactly as good as another! Does the reader happen to know of any form of Occidental civilization which would have stood such a sudden and severe strain as that?

That Chinese nerves are totally different from those with which we are endowed, has been already shown, but that does not prove that the "obtuse-nerved Turanian" is a stoic, like the North American Indian. The Chinese bear their ills, not only with fortitude, but what is often far more difficult, with patience. A Chinese who had lost the use of both eyes, applied to a foreign physician to know if the sight could be restored, adding simply, that if it could not be restored, he should stop being anxious about it. The physician told him that nothing could be done, upon which the man remarked, "Then my heart is at ease." His was not what we call resignation, much less the indifference of despair, but merely the quality which enables us to "bear the ills we have." We have come to recognize worry as the bane in our modern life, the rust which corrodes the blade, far more than the hardest use can destroy it. It is well for the Chinese that they are gifted with the capacity not to worry, for taking the race as a whole, there are comparatively few who do not have some very practical reason for deep anxiety. Vast districts of this fertile Empire are periodically subject to drought, flood, and in consequence, to famine. Social calamities, such as law-suits, and disasters even more dreaded, because indefinite, overhang the head of thousands, but this fact would never be discovered by the observer. We have often asked a Chinese, whose possession of his land, his house, and sometimes of his wife was disputed, what the outcome would be. "There will never be any peace," is a common reply. "And when will the matter come to a head?" "Who knows?" is the frequent answer, "it may be early or it may be late, but there is sure to be trouble in plenty." For life under such conditions what can be a better outfit than an infinite capacity for patience?

The exhibition of Chinese patience which is likely to make the strongest impression upon a foreigner, is that which is unfortunately so often to be seen in all parts of the Empire, when the calamities to which reference has just been made, have been realized upon an enormous scale. The provinces of China with which foreigners are most familiar, are seldom altogether free from disasters due to flood, drought, and resultant famine. The recollection of the terrible sufferings in the famine of 1877-78, which involved untold millions of people, will not soon fade from

the memories of those who were witnesses of that distress. Since than the woes inflicted upon extensive regions, by the overflow of the Yellow River, and by its sudden change of channel, have been past all computation or comprehension. Some of the finest parts of several different provinces have been devastated, and fertile soil has been buried a fathom deep in blighting sands of desolation. Thousands of villages have been annihilated, and the wretched inhabitants who have escaped death by flood, have been driven forth as wanderers on the face of the earth, without homes and without hope. Great masses of human beings, suddenly ruined, and reduced to desperation by no fault of their own, are not agreeable objects of contemplation to any government. Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and what is more natural than that those who through no preventible causes have been suddenly brought to starvation, should combine to compel those who have food, to share with those who have none? While it is true that relief is extended in a certain way, in some large cities, and where the poor sufferers are most congregated, it is also true that this relief is limited in quantity, brief in duration, and does not provide the smallest remedy for more than a minute percentage of even the worst distress. Toward the prolongation of the lives of those who suffer from great calamities, the government feels itself able to do but a trifle. Toward the reclamation of their land, the reconstruction of their houses, and the resumption of life under new conditions, the government does nothing whatever. If it remits its taxes, it does all that the people expect, and it frequently does not remit those until it has been again and again demonstrated to the district magistrate, that out of nothing, nothing comes. To a foreigner from the lands of the West, where the revolutionary cry of "Bread! bread! or blood!" has become familiar, it is hard to understand why the hordes of homeless, famishing and desperate refugees, who roam over the provinces blighted by flood or famine, do not precipitate themselves in a mass upon the district magistrate of the region where they have been ruined, and demand some form of succour. It is true that the magistrate would be quite powerless to give them what they demand, but he would be forced to do something, and this would be a precedent for something more. If he failed to "tranquillize" the people, he would be removed, and some other

official put in his place. To repeated and pressing enquiries put to the Chinese in the great famine, as to the reasons why some such plan was not taken, the invariable answer was in the words, "Not dare." It is vain to argue in reply to this statement, that one might as well be killed for rebellion, albeit unjustly, as to starve to death—nay—much better. The answer is still the same, "Not dare, not dare." There seem to be two reasons why the Chinese do not adopt some such course. They are a most practical people, and by a kind of instinct the futility of the plan is recognized, and hence it would be next to impossible to effect the needed combination. But we must believe that the principal reason is the unlimited capacity of the Chinese for patient endurance. This it is, which brings about one of the most melancholy spectacles to be seen in China, that of thousands of persons quietly starving to death, within easy reach of overflowing abundance. The Chinese are so accustomed to this strange sight, that they are hardened to it, as old veterans disregard the horrors of battle. Those who suffer these evils have been all their lives confronted by them, although at a little distance. When the disaster comes, it is therefore accepted as alike inevitable and remediless. If those who are overtaken by it, can trundle their families on wheelbarrows off to some region where a bare subsistence can be begged, they will do that. If the family cannot be kept together, they will disperse, picking up what they can, and reuniting if they succeed in pulling through the distress. If no relief is to be had near at hand, whole caravans will beg their way a journey of a thousand miles in mid-winter to some province where they hope to find that the crops have been better, that labour is more in demand, and that the chances of survival are greater. If the floods have abated, the mendicant farmer returns to his home long enough to scratch a crack in the mud while it is still too soft to bear the weight of an animal for ploughing, and in this tiny rift he deftly drops a little seed wheat, and again goes his devious way, begging a subsistance until his small harvest shall be ripe. If Providence favours him, he becomes once more a farmer, and no longer a beggar, but with the distinctly recognized possibility of ruin and starvation never far away.

It has always been thought to be a powerful argument for the immortality of the soul, that its finest powers often find in this

life no fit opportunity for expansion. If this be a valid argument, is there not reason to infer that the unequalled patient endurance of the Chinese race must have been designed for some nobler purpose than merely to enable them to bear with fortitude the ordinary ills of life, and the miseries of gradual starvation? If it be the teaching of history that the fittest survive, then surely a race with such a gift, backed by a splendid vitality, must have before it a magnificent future.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PHYSICAL VITALITY.

THAT physical vitality which forms so important a background for other Chinese characteristics, deserves consideration by itself. It may be regarded in four aspects; the reproductive power of the Chinese race; its adaptation to different circumstances; its longevity, and its recuperative power.

It has been already repeatedly remarked that the first impression which the traveller derives from the phenomena of Chinese life, is that of redundance. China seems to be full of people. It seems to be so, because it is so. Japan, too, appears to have a large population, but it does not take a very discrimitating eye to perceive that the dense population of Japan bears no proportion to the dense population of China. In respect of relative and absolute density of population, China more nearly resembles India than any other country. But the people and the languages of India are many and various, while the people of China, with some exceptions not materially affecting the issue, are one and the same. This first impression of a redundant population is everywhere confirmed, no matter in what portion of this broad Empire we set our foot. Where the population is in reality sparse, this is generally found to be due to causes which are susceptible of easy explanation. The terrible inroads of the great T'aip'ing rebellion, followed by the only less destructive Mohammedan rebellion, and by the almost unparalleled famine of 1877-78, extending over five provinces, reduced the total population of China, perhaps by many scores of millions. The devastations due to war are not so soon repaired to the eye as they would be in Western lands, owing to the great reluctance of the Chinese to leave their ancestral homes and go into new regions. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to perceive that the forces of waste, no

matter how devastating, are not so powerful as the forces of repair. With a few decades of peace and good crops, almost any part of China would, we think, recuperate from the disasters which during this century have come in such battalions. The provision for this recuperation is visible to everyone, and forces itself upon his notice whether he does or does not desire to contemplate it. Have any of our readers ever been in any part of the Chinese Empire where the most conspicuous objects in the towns and villages were not the troops of Chinese children, with which, as Charles Lamb says in his deprecation of the pride of overproud mothers, "every blind alley swarms?" It is one of the standing marvels of Chinese society, by what means such a vast army of little ones is fed and clothed, and it must be well borne in mind, that many of them are not "fed and clothed" to any extent, in other words, that the most extreme poverty does not apparently tend to diminish Chinese population.

The only permanent and effective check upon the rapid increase of the Chinese population appears to be the confirmed use of opium, a foe to the Chinese race more deadly than war, famine and pestilence combined. It is by no means necessary in order to receive a high idea of the multiplying power of the Chinese, to assume the existence in China of a population far vaster in numbers than that of any other country. Even if we take the lowest estimate of about two hundred and fifty millions, the point is abundantly established, for the question is not one of the mere number of people, but of the rate of increase. In the absence of any statistics, we must be content to come at conclusions in a general and an inexact way, but fortunately in this matter it is almost impossible to go wrong. The Chinese marry at a very early age, and the desire for posterity is the one ruling passion, in which, next to the love of money, the Chinese race is most agreed. Contrast the apparent growth of the Chinese at any point, with the condition of the population in France, where the rate of increase is the lowest in all Europe, and where for four years together, the returns of seventy-three departments showed an absolute decrease in the number of inhabitants. Such facts have excited the gravest fears as to the future of that great country. The Chinese, on the other hand, show no more signs of race decay than the Anglo-Saxons. The earliest recorded command

given by God to mankind, was that in which they were instructed to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." That command, as a learned professor once remarked, "has been obeyed, and it is the only command of God that has been obeyed," and of no country is this more true than of China. The Chinese Empire, as we have already had repeated occasion to remark, extends through a great area in latitude and longitude, and embraces within itself almost every variety of soil, climate and production. So far as appears, the Chinese seem to flourish equally in the sub-tropical region, the sub-arctic region, or anywhere between. Whatever differences are observed, seem to be due to the character of the region itself, and its capacity to sustain the population, rather than to any inherent difference in the capacity of the people to adapt themselves to one region rather than to another. The emigrating portions of the Chinese people come from a relatively minute area in the provinces of Kuangtung and Fukien, but wherever they go, to India, Burma, Siam, the East Indies, the Pacific Islands, Australasia, Mexico, the United States, the West Indies, Central America, or South America, we never hear that they fail to adapt themselves with wonderful and immediate success to their environment, whatever it may chance to be. What we do hear, however, is that their adaptation is so quick and so perfect, their industry and their economy so in excess of those of the natives of these lands, their solidarity and their power of mutual cohesion so phenomenal, that it is necessary for the security of the remainder of the human race that "the Chinese must go!" Under these circumstances, it is certainly most fortunate for the peace of mind of that portion of mankind which is not Chinese, that this people does not as a whole take to emigration on a large scale. If the Eastern part of the Asiatic continent were now as full of irrepressible human beings, longing to turn their energies toward the rest of the planet, as was Central Asia in the middle ages, it is hard to see what would become either of us, or of our doctrine that the fittest only survive.

The utter absence of any kind of statistics renders it impossible to speak of the longevity of the Chinese people in any other than the most general way. Probably all observers would agree in the conclusion that there is no part of China in which old people are not exceedingly numerous. The aged are always

treated with great respect, and old age is held to be an exceedingly great honour, and is reckoned as the foremost of the five varieties of felicity. The extreme care which is taken to preserve accurate records of the date of birth, down to the precise hour, tends to precision of statement, when there is any occasion for such precision, albeit the ordinary method of counting, as has been mentioned, is so loose and inaccurate. The testimony of grave-yard tablets is in favour of a considerable degree of longevity among the common people, but except in the vicinity of supplies of stone, these tablets are not to be found over more than the minutest fraction of the whole number of graves, so that whatever inferences might otherwise be drawn from them, as witnesses, the tablets are practically valueless. It is not common to hear of Chinese who are more than a hundred years of age,* but short of that limit the numbers of very aged who could anywhere be collected, if sufficient inducement were offered, we must consider as very large. Indeed when the exceedingly imperfect nutrition of the poor, who constitute so large a part of the population of China, is taken into account, it becomes a wonder how such numbers of people survive to so great an age. It is well-known that in all Western lands, throughout the present century, the average duration of life has been constantly rising. This is due to the increased attention paid to the laws of life, to improved means of preventing disease and to improved means of treating it. It must be remembered that in China, on the other hand, the conditions of life do not seem to vary greatly from what they were when Columbus discovered America. If social and medical science could do for China what has been done for England within the past fifty years, the number of very old people in the former country would certainly be very greatly increased.

The complete ignorance of the laws of hygiene which characterises almost all Chinese, and their apparent contempt for those laws even when apprehended, are well-known to all foreigners who live in China. To a foreign observer it is a standing problem, why the various diseases which this ignorance and defiance of

* There is a strong prejudice in some parts of China against being a full hundred years of age. In some instances persons have been known to call themselves 99 for several years together; possibly the oblique mental reference is to the old man whom Confucius rapped on the shins with a staff, and of whom he remarked, "Old, and yet he will not die."

natural laws invite, do not exterminate the Chinese altogether. While vast numbers of people do die every year in China of diseases which are entirely preventible, the fact that the number of such persons is not indefinitely greater, argues on the part of the Chinese a marvellous capacity to resist disease, and to recover from it. In the total absence of those vital statistics to which we have already so often regretfully referred, we are obliged to depend upon the recorded observations of foreigners, which, owing to the constantly increasing number of foreign dispensaries and hospitals, are becoming year by year more numerous and more valuable. To analyze and tabulate the medical reports issued even in a single year, with a view to illustrating the recuperative power of the Chinese, would be a most useful task, and the result would certainly present the object in a fresh and forcible manner. We must, however, be content with the mere statement of a few cases, by way of illustration, two of which occurred within the knowledge of the writer, while the third is taken from the published reports of a large hospital in Tientsin. The whole force of instances of this sort depends upon the undoubted fact, that they are by no means isolated and altogether exceptional cases, but are such as could be matched by the observation of very many of our readers.

Several years ago, while living in a house with a Chinese family, the writer heard one afternoon the most dismal screams under the window, where was placed a large beehive, made of adobe bricks, and open at the bottom. A little boy fourteen months of age was playing in the yard and seeing this opening into what looked like a convenient play-house, had injudiciously crawled in. The child's head was shaved perfectly bare, and was very red. The bees either resenting the unusual intrusion, or mistaking the bald pate for a huge peony, promptly lit upon the head, and began to sting. Before he could be removed, the child had received more than thirty stings. The child cried but a few moments, and then being laid on the *k'ang* went to sleep. No medicine of any sort being at hand, nothing was applied to the skin. During the night the child was perfectly quiet, and the next day no trace of the swelling remained.

In the year 1878, a carter in the employ of a foreign family in Peking was taken with the prevalent typhus fever, of which

so many died. On the thirteenth day when the disease reached a crisis, the patient, who had been very ill indeed, became exceedingly violent, exhibiting the strength of several men. Three persons were deputed to watch him, all of whom were exhausted with their labours. During the night of this day, the patient was tied to the bed to prevent his escape. While the watchers were all asleep, he contrived to loosen the cords with which he was bound, and escaped from the house perfectly naked. He was missed at about 3 a.m., and the whole premises were searched, including the wells, into which it was feared he might have plunged. He was traced to the wall of the compound, which was nine or ten feet in height, and which he had scaled by climbing a tree. He leaped or fell to the ground on the outer side of this wall, and at once made his way to the moat just inside the great wall which separates the Tartar city of Peking from the Chinese city. Here he was found two hours later, his head wedged fast between the upright iron bars which prevent passage through the culvert under the wall. As he had passionately demanded to be taken to this place to cool his fever, it was evident that he had been in this situation for a great length of time. On being taken home, his fever was found to be thoroughly broken, and though troubled with rheumatism in the legs he made a slow but sure recovery.

A Tientsin man, about thirty years of age, had been in the habit of making a living by collecting spent shells around the ground where Chinese troops were engaged in artillery practice. On one occasion he secured a shell, when on attempting to break it open, it exploded, and blew off his left leg. He was admitted to the hospital, and an amputation was performed below the knee. Instead of being cured of this dangerous mode of getting a precarious living, the man returned to it again as soon as possible, and about six months later, under similar circumstances, another explosion took place, which blew off his left hand about two inches above the wrist, leaving a ragged wound. The upper portion of the right arm was severely singed by powder. Deep lacerations took place over the bridge of the nose, and on the upper lip; punctured wounds, the result of exploding pieces of shell, were made on the right cheek, on the right upper eyelid, on the posterior edge of the frontal bone, and on the right wrist. There was also a deep cut over the right tibia, exposing the bone.

On receiving these severe injuries, the man lay in a semi-unconscious and helpless condition for four hours, exposed to the heat of the sun. A mandarin happening to see him ordered some coolies to carry him to the hospital, himself accompanying them for two miles. The bearers apparently became tired of their burden, and as soon as the mandarin was gone, threw the poor wretch into a ditch to die. Though much exhausted by the hæmorrhage, he managed to crawl out and hop for five hundred yards to a grain shop, where he found a large basket of meal, which he overturned with his sound arm and coiled himself inside. To get rid of him, the owners of the shop carried him in the basket to the hospital gates, where he was left outside to die. Although in a condition of extreme collapse, and with a feeble pulse, due to the loss of so much blood, the patient had no mental impairment and was able to converse intelligibly. He had been addicted to opium smoking, a circumstance which could not have been favourable to recovery. Yet with the exception of diarrhœa on the fifth and sixth days, and slight attacks of malaria, the patient had throughout no bad symptoms, and left the hospital with a wooden leg, four weeks after his admission.

Two men were once conversing on the use of tobacco, which one of them affirmed to be "a slow poison." This the other denied, citing the case of his own grandfather, who after having used tobacco all his life, was hale and hearty at the age of seventy. Not at all disconcerted by this instance, the first speaker replied, "Depend upon it, if your grandfather had not used tobacco, *he might have been eighty to this day!*" If a people with such physical endowments as the Chinese were to be preserved from the effects of war, famines, pestilence and opium, and if they were to pay some attention to the laws of physiology and of hygiene, and to be uniformly nourished with suitable food, there is some reason to think that they alone would be adequate to occupy the principal part of the planet and more.

CHAPTER XXXII.

EMPLOYMENT OF INTERMEDIARIES.

In the works of a modern novelist, there is a story of a certain Yankee ship-captain who was shipwrecked, but who escaped in one of the boats, taking with him the ship's instruments and a supply of provisions. While cruising about in the waters of the Pacific, the captain sighted a whale, which by means of great skill and long experience in the art, he contrived to kill with the harpoon. As it was impossible to take such an object in tow of a whale boat, it occurred to the captain to transfer himself and his men from the boat to the back of the whale, from which he daily took observations as from a deck. After floating around in this way for some time, the captain was sighted, as he had expected to be, by a whaling ship, the captain of which heard the strange story of the shipwrecked party, and then, coming to business, proposed to buy the whale, as the first captain knew he would. The dialogue between the two captains is given, as it must have been taken down, verbatim, and was as follows:—

First Captain—"What will you give?"

Second Captain—"What will you take?"

First Captain—"What will you give?"

Second Captain—"What will you take?"

"What will you give?"

"What will you take?" and so on for half a page.

Nothing could afford a greater contrast between the Occidental and the Chinese methods of doing business, than such a conversation as this. According to the ideas and practice of the Chinese, in order to make a bargain, it takes not two as our proverb says, but three, the two principals and a third who stands between them, and who is therefore the "middleman." This individual is not merely a convenience, he is a necessity. "If there are no clouds in the sky," says the Chinese adage, "there will be no rain

on the earth; if there is no one to stand between, business will not be done." Customs doubtless differ widely in different parts of China as to the details of everyday affairs, but there seems to be a general agreement in the rule, that whenever anything of consequence is to be done in the way of purchase or sale, it takes more than two persons to complete the transaction. This is true of the transfer of land, of the purchase of animals, of the sale of any considerable quantity of the products of the earth.

In a Western land, a man going home to his noon meal, meeting by accident a friend, says to him, "By the way, what will you sell that forty acre lot for?" His friend replies that he thinks it is worth fifty dollars an acre. The other man had thought of offering forty, but after ten minutes' conversation, they agree to "split the difference," and call the price forty-five dollars. The parties step into a bank, one of them draws his check for the amount, the deeds are made out the same afternoon, recorded the next forenoon for a trifling fee, and the transfer is accomplished. In China, the same end is achieved by a slow process of diplomacy. Some one must first be interviewed, in a stealthy manner, as to the probability that the piece in question can be bought. These preliminaries must be conducted with great discretion, for it is an axiom of much importance in China, that "the country villager is born perverse; the more you wish to buy, the more determined is he not to sell." But on the supposition that the land can be had at all, there ensues a long and often an interminable series of interviews between the go-between and the principals, in the course of which each party alternately advances and retreats, being dexterously manipulated by the middleman, whose interest it is to see the matter come to a successful issue, in order that he may receive his percentage. It makes no difference if the principals are neighbours divided only by a wall, or members of the same family. Such a state of things makes it all the more indispensable that the middleman should interpose, for otherwise, as one is constantly told, the matter could not even be mentioned between them. And why, you venture to ask, cannot two principals who know each other well do their own business at first hand, and save the expense of a middleman? Because the interests of the two principals, you are reminded, are directly opposite to one another, while the interests of the middleman

are identical with those of each party. Translated into plain English, this merely signifies that the two parties do not trust one another, but agree to trust the middleman, in order that if there is any hitch, as there would surely be without him, each party may have some responsible person whose business and whose interest it shall be to adjust the affair, and bring it to a head. Even if the matter in question were much simpler than the sale of land, it would in all probability require intermediaries. One man has a great abundance of turnips, but has no sweet potatoes. His next door neighbour in the village has plenty of potatoes, but no turnips. Each of them wishes both potatoes and turnips. But instead of settling the matter by a friendly word over the wall after breakfast, each of them will go to the market distant several miles, taking his turnips or his potatoes with him, and if the other man wishes to buy these vegetables then and there, he can do so. "But why," you inquire, "would it not be simpler to exchange the roots at home, and save the time and trouble of hauling them?" For the reason that unless the vegetables were taken to the market, it would be utterly impossible to tell what the price ought to be, and one party or the other might be cheated. *Neither of them trusts the other*, and each knows that the only way to be sure that some advantage is not taken of him is to bring the matter to the arbitration of the general public, in the form of an ordinary market sale, where the resultant between the advances of the buyers and the retreats of the sellers, are, *de facto*, the market price. In a country where market reports are practically unknown, and where each place and each time are as distinct as possible from every other place and every other time, the middleman is an absolute necessity. It should be added that the percentage of the Chinese middleman does not appear to be unduly onerous, say five per cent., thus affording an instructive contrast to those cases annually reported as occurring in a great grain mart like Chicago, where the farmer takes his wheat to market, and sometimes finds that after paying the railways for transportation, the elevators for storage, and the middleman for sale, he not only has no money in hand, but is appreciably in debt to the benefactors who have kindly taken his crop off his hands! It was of such a case as this that an old farmer observed that he thought the "middleman" stood too near the other end!

If the interposition of an intermediary is essential to the completion of a transfer of property, it is not less so in one of the most important acts of life, namely that of arranging marriages. We are twice informed in the Book of Odes, that as the axe is necessary in order to cut wood, so a go-between is requisite in order to secure a wife. This statement is of special interest as showing the antiquity of the custom of arranging these matters through a third party. The reasons which made it a necessity then make it a necessity now, for there seems little reason to think that in all these ages the Chinese have materially altered. It is quite practicable to have the go-between a friend or relative of one of the parties, and in that case the party whose friend the go-between is, feels a degree of security as to his own interests that would be otherwise out of the question. The reputation of professional match-makers is generally bad, their sole object being to accomplish the union, irrespective of fitness or of the real wishes of the principals. Yet notwithstanding the constant frauds which are perpetrated by these go-betweens, who act for a pecuniary reward only, they do a surprisingly large percentage of the business of match-making. The supposition that two members of families directly interested in a possible union, should themselves, unaided by any outside intervention, arrange the details between them, appears to the Chinese as fatuous, as that a person who has occasion to cross a river should insist upon swimming, when there is already a good bridge. That parents arrange the matches for their children without reference whatever to the latter, is a matter of course, and it is often done when the children are very young and sometimes before they are born. If the parents are not living, it becomes the duty of the next of kin to see that a match of some sort is negotiated. This can be done quite as well when the young man is a thousand miles distant. If it should happen that during his absence from home, a match has been arranged for him, where he is, by some other parties and he has been actually married, then the law allows this somewhat irregular marriage to stand, and the girl who had been betrothed to him at his home, is re-engaged to some one else. One of the first questions which Chinese women ask of foreign ladies with whom they become well acquainted, is who arranged their marriages for them and how it is possible for them to live at such vast distances from their

mothers-in-law! Upon hearing that foreign ladies arrange their own marriages, and that they often receive a letter from some man enquiring whether the lady will or will not consent to become in future the wife of said man, we have seen a roomful of Chinese women and girls go off into shrieks of irrepressible laughter. There is nothing in the marriage customs of the most savage tribe on the planet, which strikes us as so absurd as our customs appear to the average Chinese. It is not to be wondered at if the Chinese look with more or less suspicion upon matches which are settled in such an amazing fashion, for one of their aphorisms observes that "without the decree of one's parents, and without the intervention of a go-between, to arrange marriages for ourselves would make us all thieves!"

In speaking of the peaceableness of the Chinese in describing what we have called "social typhoons," attention has been already called to the fact that Chinese society is very far from being in a state of equilibrium. The excessive solidarity of Chinese social life, the intricate and widely ramifying relationships, the compactness of the dwellings, the entire diversity of interests represented by those who are in the closest connection with each other, combined with the deep poverty of a large percentage of the entire population, sufficiently account for the indisputable fact that Chinese dwellings are full of quarrels and domestic unpleasantnesses. These vary from the merest trifles, up to those hurricanes which devastate homes, and reduce whole families to ruin, a result by no means uncommon. But there is scarcely one of these multitudinous cases, in which the services of a "peace-talker" (*shuo-ho-ti*), or some other intermediary, do not become the indispensable condition upon which it is possible to secure a *modus vivendi*. Their services, often involving tasks of the most vexatious and thankless sort, are generally freely given, and it is not uncommon for them to be at considerable expense for which they receive no recompense, except the consciousness of having done a meritorious act. The qualification which is most necessary to fit one for services of this sort, is not wealth, which is rare, nor a literary degree, which is still rarer, nor weight of years, although this may be an important help, but *the capacity to talk*. The fluent speaker, full of reasons as an egg of meat, apt in quoting the sayings of antiquity, having behind him an extended experience

from which he is able to cite precedents, and fertile in resources—such a man is everywhere in demand, and will proverbially become grey before his time, by reason of the vicarious anxieties which will be put upon him to adjust the quarrels of others. Fortunately every Chinese community can furnish such men, and the work which they do is a highly important one, though not always appreciated at its full value. Millions of possible law-suits are nipped in the bud, or at least suppressed in the early stages, by the exertions of these friendly interveners, who, themselves free from passion, are able clearly to see the desirability of peace and reconciliation. It constantly happens that these very men, who have distinguished themselves by their readiness to help others out of their troubles, fall into like difficulties of their own, for the ready talker is sure sooner or later to offend some one, and thus to bring trouble upon himself. On these occasions, the man who but lately "talked reason" to his neighbours, when he himself had nothing at stake, is now with difficulty restrained from some rash act of violence by other "peace-talkers" who have taken him in charge, and thus the debt which is due him for some former services, is now repaid in kind. "There is no one," says the Chinese proverb, "who can avoid being under obligation to others." The character in Chinese which signifies to commit, to entrust, to commission, to ask, is a very important character indeed and one the use of which is apparent in every relation of life.

It is related of Sir Edwin Landseer, that a pig-dealer of his acquaintance once asked him if he knew the Queen. "Why, yes," he answered "everybody knows the Queen." But what the pig-dealer meant was not this general knowledge which is common to all her subjects, but a speaking acquaintance. Being informed on this point, and asked why he raised the question, the pig-dealer replied, "Well sir, you see there must be such a lot of pig-wash from Buckingham palace and them sort of places, most likely thrown away; and my missus and me thinks that if you would just tip a word or two to the Queen, who is a real kind lady, one and all says she would give her orders, and I could fetch the wash away every week with my barrer." The man of pigs had gained a comprehensive perception of what the Chinese mean by the character *t'o*. It means to get some one else to do for you what you cannot do for yourself.

The facilities of communication in Western lands, between all classes of society, by means of the postal system, render it difficult for us to take in at first the radically different state of things in China. Here there is absolutely no way by which one can get a word to the ear of a magistrate, except by being examined in open court, an ordeal, the thought of which causes cold shivers to run over the frame of even the impassive Chinese. Postal system there is none. A written message could not be sent, and would not be delivered, unless the underlings at the gate were made acquainted with the nature of the errand, and duly bribed. To stop an official in his chair, is an extreme, and a not very satisfactory step; when this has been done once, and no reply obtained, the petitioner is in a worse condition than before. A person in a country telegraph station, who wishes to send a message, is not more absolutely dependent upon the telegraph operator, than the ordinary Chinese is upon the friend who is acquainted with the legal steps to be taken, and what is of far more value, knows how to take them properly. Such a man is the needle, without which the thread cannot enter—the boat without which the river cannot be crossed. Every stage of a Chinese law-suit, illustrates the utter dependence of the Chinese upon the intermediary, by whom alone these essential steps can be taken. The very accusation cannot be put upon paper without the assistance of an expert, and from the time that the accusation is indicted, to the time when final judgment is pronounced, there is not a moment when the litigants are not compelled to put themselves in the hands of those through whom alone the desired results can be secured.

The whole scheme of Chinese government, we need not remind the reader, is a gigantic example of the employment of intermediaries. Not only does the system involve gradations of extreme elaboration, but the intervention of members of each grade is a necessity for those who hope to rise from below. The relation between one who wishes to improve his official position, and the person through whom he hopes to accomplish this end, is the relation between the water and the fish; if the one dries up, the other dies.

The employment of intermediaries is essential to the foreigner in China, to a degree far beyond what is true of a native Chinese.

Among the servants there is frequently some one who is the medium through whom all orders are communicated to the rest. Nothing can be done without him, either by the other servants, or by the master. He may be dislocated from his position by a violent wrench, but as long as he holds it, he is supreme. The same phenomenon is seen in all kinds of commerce, where the tea guilds, the silk guilds, and other dealers come into connection with foreigners. In all such cases there is on the part of the Chinese that perfect solidarity of which we have so often had occasion to speak. Whenever the interests of the foreigner and those of his Chinese dealers come into collision, deadlock ensues, and like other locks, this can be opened only by the key of the combination, which is always in the hands of the Chinese. Consider for a moment, whether the foreigner be a merchant, consul, missionary or traveller, how very small a part of what he does in China can be done effectively, not to say done at all, without the assistance of some Chinese. To struggle against this inevitable necessity, is only to make ourselves ridiculous, for we might as well resist the pressure of the atmosphere. Our skill will be shown, not in the attempt to dispense with the dispensable, but in the use of it to attain ends, which without this aid would have been unattainable.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FILIAL PIETY.

To discuss the characteristics of the Chinese, without mentioning filial piety, is out of the question. But the filial piety of the Chinese is not an easy subject to treat. These words, like many others which we are obliged to employ, have among the Chinese a sense very different from that which we are accustomed to attach to them, and a sense of which no English expression is an exact translation. This is also true of a great variety of terms used in Chinese, and of no one more than of the word ordinarily rendered ceremony *(li)*, with which filial piety is intimately connected. To illustrate this, and at the same time to furnish a background for what we have to say of the characteristic under discussion, we cannot do better than to cite a passage from M. Callery (quoted in the *Middle Kingdom*): "Ceremony epitomizes the entire Chinese mind; and in my opinion, the Book of Rites is *per se* the most exact and complete monograph that China has been able to give of herself to other nations. Its affections, if it has any, are satisfied by ceremony; its duties are fulfilled by ceremony; its virtues and vices are referred to ceremony; the natural relations of created beings essentially link themselves in ceremonial—in a word, to that people ceremonial is man as a moral, political, and religious being, in his multiplied relations with family, society, and religion." Everyone must agree in Dr. Williams' comment upon this passage, that it shows how "meagre a rendering is "ceremony" for the Chinese idea of *li*, for it includes not only the external conduct, but involves the right principles from which all true etiquette and politeness spring."

One of the most satisfactory methods to ascertain the Chinese view of filial piety would be to trace the instruction which is contained on this subject, in the Four Books, and in the other

Classics, especially in the "Filial Piety Classic." This has already been done by far abler writers, especially by Mr. Faber in his "Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius," as well as in a monograph devoted to this topic. Our present object is merely to direct attention to the doctrine as put into practice by the Chinese, of whom filial piety, in the sense in which they understand it, is not merely a character, but a peculiarity. If the views presented do not correspond with those of some of our readers, it must be remembered that Chinese filial piety is many-sided, and the same things are not to be seen in all situations, nor by all observers.

At the Missionary Conference held in Shanghai in the year 1877, a paper was read by Dr. Yates on Ancestral Worship, in which he embodied the results of his thirty years' experience in China. In one of the opening sentences of this elaborate essay, the author, after speaking of ancestral worship considered merely as a manifestation of filial piety, continues, "The term "filial" is misleading, and we should guard against being deceived by it. Of all the people of whom we have any knowledge, the sons of the Chinese are most unfilial, disobedient to parents, and pertinacious in having their own way from the time they are able to make known their wants." Dr. Legge, the distinguished translator of the Chinese Classics, who retired from China after thirty-three years' experience, has quoted this passage from Dr. Yates, for the purpose of most emphatically dissenting from it, declaring that his experience of the Chinese has been totally different. This merely illustrates the familiar truth, that there is room for honest difference of opinion among men, as among thermometers, and that a correct view can only be reached by combining results that appear to be absolutely inharmonious, into a whole that shall be even more comprehensive than either of its parts. That Chinese children have no proper discipline, that they are not taught to obey their parents, and that as a rule they have no idea of prompt obedience as we understand it, is a most indubitable fact attested by wide experience. But that the later years of these ungoverned or half-governed children generally do not exhibit such results as we should have expected, appears to be not less a truth. The Chinese think and say that "The crooked tree, when grown large will straighten itself," by which

metaphor is figured the belief that children when grown will do the things which they ought to do. However it may be in regard to other duties, there really appears to be some foundation for this theory in the matter of filial behaviour. The occasion of this phenomenon seems to lie in the nature of the Chinese doctrine of filial piety, the manner in which it is taught, and the prominence which is everywhere given to it. It is said in the Filial Piety Classic that "There are three thousand crimes to which one or the other of the five kinds of punishment is attached as a penalty; and of these no one is greater than disobedience to parents." One of the many antithetical sayings in common circulation runs as follows:—"Of the hundred virtues, filial conduct is the chief, but it must be judged by the intentions, not by acts, for judged by acts, there would not be a filial son in the world." The Chinese are expressly taught that a defect of any virtue, when traced to its root, is a lack of filial piety. He who violates propriety is deficient in filial conduct. He who serves his prince, but is not loyal, lacks filial piety. He who is a magistrate, without due respect for its duties, is lacking in filial piety. He who does not show proper sincerity towards his friends lacks filial piety. He who fails to exhibit courage in battle lacks filial piety. Thus the doctrine of filial conduct is seen to embrace much more than mere acts, and descends into the motives, taking cognizance of the whole moral being.

In the popular apprehension, the real basis of the virtue of filial conduct is felt to be gratitude. This is emphasized in the Filial Piety Classic, and in the chapter of the Sacred Edicts on the subject, which closely follows the doctrine of Tseng Tzu. The justification of the period of three years' mourning is found, according to Confucius, in the undoubted social fact that "for the first three years of its existence, the child is not allowed to leave the arms of its parents," as if the one term were in some way an offset for the other. The young lamb is proverbially a type of filial behaviour, for it has the grace to kneel when sucking its dam. Filial piety demands that we should preserve the bodies which our parents gave us, otherwise we seem to slight their kindness. Filial piety requires that we should serve our parents while they life, and worship them when dead. Filial piety requires that a son should follow in the steps of his father.

"If for the three years, he does not alter from the way of his father," says Confucius, "he may be called filial." But if the parents are manifestly in the wrong, filial piety does not forbid an attempt at their reformation, as witness the following, quoted by Dr. Williams, from the Book of Rites: "When his parents are in error, the son with a humble spirit, pleasing countenance, and gentle tones, must point it out to them. If they do not receive his reproof, he must strive more and more to be dutiful and respectful to them till they are pleased, and then he must again point out their error. But if he does not succeed in pleasing them, it is better that he should continue to reiterate reproof, than permit them to do injury to the whole department, district, village, or neighbourhood. And if the parents, irritated and displeased, chastise their son till the blood flows from him, even then he must not dare to harbour the least resentment; but on the contrary should treat them with increased respect and dutifulness." It is to be feared that in most Western lands, the admonition of parents upon these terms would be allowed to fall into "innocuous desuetude," and it is not to be wondered that we do not hear much of it even in China!

In the second book of the Confucian Analects, we find record of several different answers which Confucius gave as to the nature of filial piety, his replies being varied according to the circumstances of the questioners. The first answer which is mentioned is that to an officer of the State of Lu, and is comprised in the compendious expression, "wu-wei," which he apparently left in the mind of the querist, as a kind of seed to be developed by time and reflection. The words "wu-wei" simply mean "not disobedient," and it is natural that Mang I, the officer who had enquired, so understood them. But Confucius, like the rest of his countrymen, since had a "talent for indirection," and instead of explaining himself to Mang I, he waited until some time later when one of Confucius' disciples was driving him out, when the master repeated the question of Mang I to this disciple, and also the reply. The disciple, whose name was Fan Ch'ih, on hearing the words "wu-wei," very naturally asked, "What did you mean?" which gave the master the requisite opportunity to tell what he really meant, in the following words: "That parents when alive should be served according to propriety, that when dead they should be

buried according to propriety, and that they should be sacrificed to according to propriety." The conversation between Confucius and Fan Ch'ih was intended by the former to lead the latter to report it to Mang I, who would thus discover what was meant to be inferred from the words "wu-wei!" In other answers of the master to the question what is denoted by filial piety, Confucius laid stress upon the requirement that parents should be treated with reverence, adding that when they are not so treated, mere physical care for them is on a plane with the care bestowed upon dogs and horses. These passages have been quoted in this connection, to show that the notion that filial piety consists largely in compliance with the wishes of parents, and in furnishing them what they need and what they want, is a very ancient idea in China. Confucius expressly says "The filial piety of the present time means (only) the support of one's parents," implying that in ancient times, of which he was so fond, and which he wished to revive, it was otherwise. Many ages have elapsed since these conversations of the master took place, and his doctrine has had time to penetrate the marrow of the Chinese people, as indeed it has done. But if Confucius were alive to-day, there is good reason to think that he would affirm more emphatically than ever, "The filial piety of the present time means only the support of one's parents." That the popular conscience responds to the statement of the claims of filial piety, as to no other duty, has been already observed, but in the same connection it ought to be clearly understood what this filial piety is supposed to connote. If ten uneducated persons, taken at random, were to be asked what they mean by being "filial," it is altogether probable that nine of them would reply, "that it means not letting one's parents get angry," that is, because they are not properly served. Or in a more condensed form, filial piety is "wu-wei," "not disobedient," which is what the master said it is, albeit he used the words in "a Pickwickian sense."

If any of our readers wish to see this theory in a practical form, let them recall the four and twenty ensamples of filial piety, immortalized in the familiar little book called by that name. In one of these cases, a boy who lived in the "After Han Dynasty," at the age of six paid a visit to a friend, by whom he was entertained with oranges. The precocious youth on this occasion, executed

the common Chinese feat of stealing two oranges, and thrusting them up his sleeve. But as he was making his parting bows, the fruit rolled out, and left the lad in an embarrassing situation, to which, however, he was equal. Kneeling down before his host, he made the memorable observation which has rendered his name illustrious for nearly two millenniums: "My mother loves oranges very much, and I wanted them for her." As this lad's father was an officer of high rank, it would seem to an Occidental critic, that the boy might have enjoyed other opportunities for gratifying her desire for oranges, but to the Chinese the lad is a classic instance of filial devotion, because at this early age, he was thoughful for his mother, or perhaps so quick at inventing an excuse. Another lad of the Chin dynasty, whose parents had no mosquito nets, at the age of eight, hit upon the happy expedient of going to bed very early, lying perfectly quiet all night, not even brandishing a fan, in order that the family mosquitoes might gorge themselves upon him alone, and allow his parents to sleep in peace! Another lad to the same dynasty, lived with a step-mother who disliked him, but as she was very fond of carp, which were not to be obtained during the winter, he adopted the injudicious plan of taking off his clothes, and lying on the ice, which so impressed a brace of carp who had observed the proceeding from the under side, that they made a hole in the ice, and leaped forth in order to be cooked for the benefit of the irascible step-mother!

According to the Chinese teaching, one of the instances of unfilial conduct, is found in "selfish attachment to wife and children." In the chapter of the Sacred Edict already quoted, this behaviour is mentioned in the same connection with gambling, and the exhortations against each are of the same kind. The typical instance of true filial devotion, among the twenty-four just mentioned, is a man who lived in the Han dynasty, and who being very poor, found that he had not sufficient food to nourish both his mother and his child three years of age. "We are so poor," he said to his wife, "that we cannot even support mother. Moreover, the little one shares mother's food. Why not bury the child? We may have another, but if mother should die, we cannot obtain her again." His wife dared not oppose him, and accordingly a hole was dug more than two feet deep, when a vase of gold was found, with a suitable inscription, stating that Heaven

bestowed this reward on a filial son. If the golden vase had not emerged, the child would have been buried alive, and according to the doctrine of filial piety, as commonly understood, rightly so. "Selfish attachment to wife and children" must not hinder the murder of a child, to prolong the life of its grandparent.

The Chinese believe that there are cases of obstinate illness of parents, which can only be cured by the offering of a portion of the flesh of a son or a daughter, which must be cooked and eaten by the unconscious parent. While the favourable results are not certain, they are very probable. The *Peking Gazette* frequently contains references to cases of this sort. The writer is personally acquainted with a young man who cut off a slice of his leg to cure his mother, and who exhibited the scar with the pardonable pride of an old soldier. While such cases are doubtless not very common, they are probably not excessively rare.

The most important aspect of Chinese filial piety is indicated in a saying of Mencius, that "there are three things which are unfilial, and to have no posterity is the greatest of them." The necessity for posterity arises from the necessity for continuing the sacrifices for ancestors, which is thus made the most important duty in life. It is for this reason that every son must be married at as early an age as possible. It is by no means uncommon to find a Chinese a grandfather, by the time he is thirty-six. The failure to have male children is mentioned first among the seven causes for the divorce of a wife. The necessity for male children has led to the system of concubinage, with all its attendant miseries. It furnishes a ground, eminently rational to the Chinese mind, for the greatest delight at the birth of sons, and a corresponding depression on occasion of the birth of daughters. It is this aspect of the Chinese doctrine which is responsible for a large proportion of the enormous infanticide which is known to exist in China. This crime is much more common in the south of China than in the north, where it often seems to be wholly unknown. But it must be remembered that it is the most difficult of all subjects upon which to secure exact information, just in proportion to the public sentiment against it. The number of illegitimate children can never be small, and there is everywhere the strongest motive to destroy all such, whatever the sex. Even if direct testimony to the destruction of the life of female infants in any region were

much less than it is, it would be a moral certainty that a people among whom the burial alive of a child of three in order to facilitate the support of its grandmother is held to be an act of filial devotion, could not possibly be free from the guilt of destroying the lives of unwelcome female infants.

Reference has already been made to the theory of Chinese mourning for parents, which is supposed to consume three full years, but which in practice is mercifully shortened to twenty-seven months. In the seventeenth book of the Confucian Analects, we read of one of the disciples of the master, who argued stoutly against three years as a period for mourning, maintaining that one year was enough. To this the master conclusively replied that the superior man could not be happy during the whole three years of mourning, but that if this particular disciple thought he could be happy by shortening it a year, he might do so, but the master plainly regarded him as "no gentleman." The observance of this mourning takes precedence of all other duties whatsoever, and amounts to an excision of so much of the life-time of the sons, if they happen to be in government employ. There are instances in which extreme filial devotion is exhibited by the son's building a hut near the grave of the mother or father, and going there to live during the whole time of the mourning. The most common way in which this is done is to spend the night only at the grave, while during the day the ordinary occupations are followed as usual. But there are some sons who will be content with nothing less than the whole ceremonial, and accordingly exile themselves for the full period, engaging in no occupation whatever, but being absorbed by grief. The writer is acquainted with a man of this class, whose extreme devotion to his parents' grave for so long a time unsettled his mind, and made him a useless burden to his family. To the Chinese, such an act is highly commendable, irrespective of its consequences, which are not considered at all. The ceremonial duty is held to be absolute and not relative. It is not uncommon to meet with cases of persons who have sold their land to the last fraction of an acre, and even pulled down the house and disposed of the timbers, in order to provide money for a suitable funeral for one or both of the parents. That such conduct is a social wrong few Chinese can be brought to understand, and no Chinese can be brought to realize. It is accordant

with Chinese instinct. It is accordant with *li*, or propriety, and therefore it was unquestionably the thing to be done.

The Abbé Huc gives from his own experience an excellent example of that ceremonial filial conduct, which to the Chinese is so dear. While the Abbé was living in the south of China, during the first year of his residence in this Empire, he had occasion to send a messenger to Peking, and he bethought him that perhaps a Chinese school-master in his employ, whose home was in Peking, would like to embrace the rare opportunity to send a message to his old mother, from whom he had not heard for four years, and who did not know of her son's whereabouts. Hearing that the courier was to leave soon, the teacher called to one of his pupils, who was singing off his lesson in the next room, "Here, take this paper, and write me a letter to my mother. Lose no time, for the courier is going at once." This proceeding struck M. Huc as singular, and he enquired if the lad was acquainted with the teacher's mother, and was informed that the boy did not even know that there was such a person. "How then was he to know what to say, not having been told?" To this the school-master made the conclusive reply, "Don't he know quite well what to say? For more than a year, he has been studying literary composition, and he is acquainted with a number of eloquent formulas. Do you think he does not know perfectly well how a son ought to write to a mother?" The pupil soon returned with the letter not only all written, but sealed up, the teacher merely adding the superscription with his own hand. The letter would have answered equally well for any other mother in the Empire, and any other would have been equally pleased to receive it.

The amount of filial conduct on the part of Chinese children to their parents will vary in any two places. Doubtless both extremes are to be found everywhere. Parricides are not common, and such persons are usually insane, though that makes no difference in the cruel punishment which they suffer. But among the common people, groaning in deepest poverty, some harsh treatment of parents is inevitable. On the other hand, voluntary substitutions of a son for the father, in cases of capital punishment, are known to occur, and such instances speak forcibly for the sincerity and power of the instinct of filial devotion to a parent, though this parent may be a deeply dyed criminal.

To the Occidental, fresh from the somewhat too loose bonds of family life, which not infrequently prevail in lands nominally Christian, the theory of Chinese filial conduct presents some very attractive features. The respect for age which it involves is most beneficial, and might profitably be cultivated by Anglo-Saxons generally. In Western countries, when a son becomes of age, he goes where he likes, and does what he chooses. He has no necessary connection with his parents nor they with him. To the Chinese such customs must appear like the behaviour of a well grown calf or colt to the cow and the mare, suitable enough for animals, but by no means conformable to *li* as applied to human beings. An attentive consideration of the matter from the Chinese stand-point will show that there is abundant room in our own social practice for improvement, and that most of us really live in glass houses, and would do well not to throw stones recklessly. Yet, on the other hand, it is idle to discuss the filial piety of the Chinese, without making most emphatic its fatal defects in several particulars. This doctrine seems to have five radical faults, two of them negative, and three of them positive. It has volumes on the duty of children toward parents, but no word on the duty of parents to children. China is not a country in which advice of this kind is superfluous. Such advice is everywhere most needed and always has been so. It was an inspired wisdom which led the Apostle Paul to combine in a few brief sentences addressed to his Colossian church the four pillars of the ideal home. "Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them." "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." "Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." What is there in all Confucian morality which for practical wisdom can for a moment be put into competition with these far-reaching principles? The Chinese doctrine has nothing to say on behalf of its daughters, but everything on behalf of its sons. If the Chinese eye had not for ages been colour-blind on this subject, this gross outrage on human nature could not have failed of detection. By the accident of sex, the infant is a family divinity. By the accident of sex she is a dreaded burden, liable to be destroyed, and certain to be despised. The Chinese doctrine of filial piety puts the wife on

an inferior plane. Confucius has nothing to say of the duties of wives to husbands or of husbands to wives. Christianity requires a man to leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife. Confucianism requires a man to cleave to his father and mother, and to compel his wife to do the same. If the relation between the husband and his parents conflicts with that between the husband and his wife, the latter as the lesser and inferior is the relation which must yield. The whole structure of Chinese society, which is modelled upon the patriarchal plan, has grave evils. It encourages the suppression of some of the natural instincts of the heart that other instincts may be cultivated to an extreme degree. It results in the almost entire subordination of the younger during the whole life of those who are older. It cramps the minds of those who are subjected to its iron pressure, preventing development and healthful change.*

That tenet of the Chinese doctrine which makes filial conduct consist in leaving posterity is responsible for a long train of ills. It compels the adoption of children, whether there is or is not any adequate provision for their support. It leads to early marriages, and brings into existence millions of human beings, who by reason

* "All the laws and ethics of the Chinese revolve around the one simple thought of the earliest form of government, that of the father having control over his household, and of children obeying their parents; an idea which is made to do duty in every phase of official life, even to the Imperial Throne where sits the father of his people; and her indigenous religion centres in the worship of ancestors. Not a growth of social and political ideas, you see, but a vast accumulation of varied applications of the one idea of the relation between a father on the one hand, and an ignorant woman with babies on the other. For the idea of the relation of father and son in China is that of father and little child, and has not even advanced to the idea that when the son has grown to manhood, he is one man and his father is another; but the child is a child forever. The manly strength of the full grown developed son must bow to the word of his father, or to the mumbling of a dotard grandfather; and thus a whole hemisphere of ideas and duties is unknown, while the other half is developed and strained, and stretched to monstrosity. A relationship prior to that of parent and child, the grand principle of all true sociology, given in the very beginning of the Bible, and fundamental in all progressive civilization, is ignored, unknown, namely, the essential equality of the sexes, the husband being first of the two in household rank, and that when the child has become a man, he is no longer a child, but a man who may take to himself a wife, and these two then set up a new family. In China the woman is but a supplement to the man, and the child an appendix." (C. S. Eby, D.D., Tokio, Lectures 1883.) In his account of a trip to Wu T'ai Shan, published in his volume on the Religions of China, Dr. Edkins speaks of a place where a peripatetic vaccinator makes his rounds, charging eight hundred cash each for vaccinating boys, and four hundred cash for vaccinating girls. At a higher price girls would not have been vaccinated at all.

of the excessive pinch of poverty can barely keep soul and body together. It is the efficient cause of polygamy and concubinage, always and inevitably a curse. It is expressed and epitomized in the worship of ancestors, which is the real religion of the Chinese race. This system of ancestral worship, when rightly understood in its true significance, is one of the heaviest yokes which ever a people was compelled to bear. As pointed out by Dr. Yates, in the essay to which reference has been already made, the hundreds of millions of living Chinese are under the most galling subjection to the countless thousands of millions of the dead. "The generation of to-day is chained to the generations of the past." Ancestral worship is the best type and guarantee of that leaden conservatism to which attention has already been directed. Until that conservatism shall have received some mortal wound, how is it possible for China to adjust herself to the wholly new conditions under which she finds herself in this last quarter of the century? And while the generations of those who have passed from the stage continue to be regarded as the true divinities by the Chinese people, how is it possible that China should take a single real step forward? The true root of the Chinese practice of filial piety we believe to be a mixture of fear and self-love, two of the most powerful motives which can act on the human soul. The spirits must be worshipped on account of the power which they have for evil. From the Confucian point of view, it was a sagacious maxim of the master, that "to respect spiritual beings, but to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom." If the sacrifices are neglected, the spirits will be angry. If the spirits are angry, they will take revenge. It is better to worship the spirits, by way of insurance. This appears to be a condensed statement of the Chinese theory of all forms of worship of the dead. As between the living, the process of reasoning is equally simply. Every son has performed his filial duties to his father, and demands the same from his own son. That is what children are for. Upon this point the popular mind is explicit. "Trees are raised for shade, children are reared for old age." Neither parents nor children are under any illusions upon this subject. "If you have no children to foul the bed, you will have no one to burn paper at the grave." Each generation pays the debt which is exacted of it by the generation which preceded it, and in turn requires from the generation which comes

after full payment to the uttermost farthing. Thus is filial piety perpetuated from generation to generation, and from age to age.

Scholars are not agreed upon the question whether in the dim past, the Chinese once recognized the true God. If they ever did so, that knowledge has certainly been most effectually lost, like an inscription on an ancient coin, now covered with the accumulated rust of millenniums. It is a melancholy comment upon the exaggerated Chinese doctrine of piety that it not only embodies no reference to a Supreme Being, but that it does not in any way lead up to a recognition of His existence. Ancestral worship, which is the most complete and the ultimate expression of this filial piety, is perfectly consistent with polytheism, with agnosticism, and with atheism. It makes dead men into gods, and its only gods are dead men. Its love, its gratitude and its fears are for earthly parents only. It has no conception of a Heavenly Father, and feels no interest in such a being when He is made known. Either Christianity will never be introduced into China, or ancestral worship will be given up, for they are contradictories. In the death struggle between them, the fittest only will survive.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE ABSENCE OF SYMPATHY.

Attention has already been directed to that aspect of Chinese life, which is comprised in the term Benevolence, the very first of the so-called constant virtues. There is, however, another point of view from which this matter may be taken into consideration; Benevolence is well-wishing, Sympathy is fellow-feeling. The Chinese are often benevolent, though when judged by Occidental standards, they seldom appear to be so. It has heretofore been remarked that the apparent motive for a large percentage of Chinese benevolence is the reflex benefits which such acts are expected to ensure to the man who indulges his benevolent impulses. In giving prominence to this motive, we are only following in the footsteps of the Chinese. In some of the books which have for their express object exhortations to "virtue," an account is opened, in which the individual charges himself with every bad act which he can remember, and credits himself with every good act. The balance between the two exhibits his standing in the account books of the Chinese Rhadamanthus at any particular time. This system of retributive book-keeping exhibits clearly the practical character of the Chinese, so often remarked, as well as their constant and irrepressible tendency to consider the next life, if there be one, as only an extension and an amplification of the present state of existence. This view of the future life is Buddhistic, and however vague and inadequate it may be, it is far preferable to the pure agnosticism of Confucianism, which, not knowing life, does not profess to know about death, or the condition to which it is an introduction. Our present object, having premised that, as already explained, the Chinese do practice a certain amount of mild benevolence, is to illustrate the proposition that they are conspicuous for a deficiency in sympathy.

One of the manifestations of this characteristic of the Chinese, which earliest attracts our attention, is their attitude towards those who are in any way physically deformed. According to the popular belief, the lame, the blind, especially those who are blind of but one eye, the deaf, the bald, the cross-eyed, are all persons to be avoided. It appears to be the assumption that since the physical nature is defective, the moral nature must be so likewise. So far as our observation extends, such persons are not treated with cruelty, but they excite very little of that sympathy which in Western lands is so freely and so spontaneously extended. They are looked upon as having been overtaken by a punishment for some secret sin, a theory exactly accordant with that of the ancient Jews. The person who is so unfortunate as to be branded with some natural defect or some acquired blemish will not go long without being reminded of the fact. One of the mildest forms of this practice is that in which the peculiarity is employed as a description in such a way as to attract to it public attention. "Great elder brother with the pockmarks," says an attendant in a dispensary to a patient, "from what village do you come?" We have seen a man greet friend whom he met for the first time after New-Years, with the words, "Pockmarks, I salute you!" It will not be singular if the man whose eyes are afflicted with strabismus, hears an observation to the effect that "when the eyes look asquint, the heart is askew;" or if the man who has no hair is reminded that "out of ten bald men, nine are deceitful, and the other would be so also, were he not dumb." Such freaks of nature as albinos form an unceasing butt for a species of cheap wit, which appears never for an instant to be intermitted. The unfortunate possessor of peculiarities like this must resign himself (or herself) to a lifetime of this treatment, and happy will he be, if his temperament admits of his listening to such talk in perpetual reiteration, without becoming by turns furious and sullen.

The same excess of frankness is displayed toward those who exhibit any mental defects. "This boy," remarks a bystander, "is idiotic." The lad is probably not at all "idiotic," but his undeveloped mind may easily become blighted by the constant repetition in his presence of the proposition that he has no mind at all. This is the universal method of treating all patients afflicted with nervous diseases, or indeed with any other. All their

peculiarities, the details of their behaviour, the method in which the disease is supposed to have originated, the symptoms which attend its exacerbations, are all public property, and are all detailed in the presence of the patient, who must be thoroughly accustomed to hearing himself described as "crazy," "half-witted," "besotted in his intellect," etc., etc. In this connection should be mentioned a most conspicuous trait of the Chinese, whose notions of "propriety" are so grossly violated by what they see of Occidental society. Chinese ideas of etiquette require that men and women should keep aloof from each other, even if they happen to be members of the same family. A considerable part of the attention of an Occidental whose life is to be spent in China, must for some time be devoted to learning what particular acts are by all means to avoided, in order not to shock Chinese prejudice. Yet Chinese men and women will speak to each other, not infrequently in the presence of others, with the utmost freedom, upon subjects which in Western countries would never be mentioned at all. The apparent delicacy of the Chinese in regard to the relations between women and men is a matter of ceremony, which has no perceptible effect upon speech, much less upon the thoughts.

Among a people to whom the birth of male children is so vital a matter, it is not surprising that the fact of childlessness is a constant occasion of reproach and taunts, just as in the ancient days, when it was said of the mother of the prophet Samuel, that "her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret." If it is supposed for any reason, or without reason, that a mother has quietly smothered one of her children, it will not be strange if the announcement of the same is publicly made to a stranger. An Irish jury is alleged to have once brought in a verdict, to the effect that a person had "died by visitation of God, under suspicious circumstances." When some one was speaking of a case of this sort, the writer was informed by a "mutual friend" of both parties, that the surviving son had *smoked his father to death*, a statement for which there appeared to be no foundation whatever.

The universal Chinese practice of reviling has been already mentioned. The foulness of the language employed is beyond all description. Yet even reviling has its code of honour, and it is not considered "good form" in hurling this abuse at another,

to touch upon his actual faults, but rather to impute to him the most ignoble origin, and to heap contempt upon his ancestors. The employment of this language toward another is justly regarded as a great indignity and a grave offence, but the point of the insult consists not in the use of such language in the presence of another, nor even principally in its application to him, but in the loss of "face" which this application of such terms implies. The proper apology for the commission of this offence is not that the person who has been guilty of it has demeaned himself, and has done a disgraceful act, but that he was wrong in applying those terms to that person at that time. When this has been satisfactorily conceded, all parties are again on the proper basis with the public, and the "face" of each is duly preserved.

Side by side with the punctilious ceremony which is so dear to the Chinese heart, is the apparent inability to perceive that some things must be disagreeable to other persons, and therefore should be avoided. It is true that a popular aphorism enjoins the extenuation of a person's age, and the appreciation of the value of whatever he may have bought, but like many other wise sayings, this suggestion is much neglected in practice. A school-teacher whose wife had been obliged to work late, in order to get his garment for New-Year ready in time, wore it in triumph to make his calls withal. As it chanced, his wife had made a slight mistake in the cutting, but had skilfully concealed it by a neat seam deftly ironed down. The friends upon whom the teacher called, admired the garment, but at once remarked, "The stuff was not enough," pointing to the pressed seam by way of proof. As it was the time of the annual Chinese holiday, the wife was allowed to escape the beating, which she would else inevitably have received. A Chinese friend, who had not the smallest idea of saying what would be deficient in politeness, remarked to the writer, that when he first saw foreigners, it seemed most extraordinary that they should have beards that reached all round their faces, *just like those of monkeys*, but he added, reassuringly, "I am quite used to it now!" The teacher who is asked in the presence of his pupils, as to their capacity, replies before them all, that the one nearest the door is much the brightest, and will be a graduate by the time he is twenty years of age, but the two at the next table are certainly the stupidest children he ever saw. That such

observations have any reflex effect upon the pupils, never for a moment enters into the thought of any one. It was once proposed that a man who was said to be "a stranger to the finer feelings," should have an introduction. If a foreigner were to be the worse for liquor which he had taken in making calls, he would not be likely to mention the fact the next time he appeared at the same places. We have heard, however, of a Taot'ai, who hinted to a Consul that it was best to be judicious on such occasions, enforcing his observation with the remark: "I got very drunk indeed the last time I was here."

One of the most characteristic methods in which the Chinese lack of sympathy is manifested is in the treatment which brides receive on their wedding day. They are often very young, are always timid and are naturally terror-stricken at being suddenly thrust among strangers. Customs vary widely, but there seems to be a general indifference to the feelings of the poor child thus exposed to the public gaze. In some places it is allowable for anyone who chooses to turn back the curtains of the chair and stare at her. In other regions, the unmarried girls find it a source of keen enjoyment to post themselves at a convenient position, as the bride passes, to throw upon her handfuls of hay seed or chaff, which will obstinately adhere to her carefully oiled hair for a long time. Upon her emergence from the chair, at the house of her new parents, she is subjected to the same kind of criticism as a newly bought horse, with what feelings, on her part, it is not difficult to imagine.

The wholy family life of the Chinese illustrates their lack of the quality of sympathy. Not one parent in fifty has any care what his children are about, when their help is not needed in work. Few fathers have the smallest thought as to what their children are learning, if they are at school, or ever think of visiting the school-house to ascertain. This is one of many reasons why it is so common to find persons who have been years at school, who cannot read ten consecutive characters taken at random. Sometimes pupils spend two years in what is miscalled study, and do not get through the Trimetrical Classic. While there are very great differences in different households, and while from the nature of the case, generalization is precarious, it is easy to see that most Chinese homes which are seen at all are by no

means happy homes. It is impossible that they should be so, for they are deficient in that unity of feeling which to us seems so essential to real home-life. A Chinese family is generally an association of individuals who are indissolubly tied together, having many of their interests the same, and many of them very different. The result is not our idea of a home, and it is not sympathy.

The deep poverty of the masses of the people of the Chinese Empire, and the terrible struggle constantly going on to secure even the barest subsistence, have familiarized them with the most pitiable exhibitions of suffering of every conceivable variety. Whatever might be the benevolent impulses of any Chinese, he is from the nature of the case wholly helpless to relieve even a thousandth part of the misery which he sees about him all the time, misery multiplied many times in any year of special distress. A thoughtful Chinese must recognize the utter futility of the means which are employed to alleviate distress, whether by individual kindness, or by government interference. All these methods, even when taken at their best, amount simply to a treatment of symptoms and do absolutely nothing toward removing disease. Their operation is akin to that of societies which should distribute small pieces of ice among the victims of typhoid fever—so many ounces to each patient, with no hospitals, no dieting, no medicine and no nursing. It is not therefore strange that the Chinese are not more benevolent in practical ways, but rather, that with the total lack of system, of prevision and of supervision, benevolence continues at all. We are familiar with the phenomenon of the effect upon the most cultivated persons, of constant contact with misery which they have no power to help or to hinder, for this is illustrated in every modern war. The first sight of blood causes a sinking of the epigastric nerves, and makes an indelible impression. But this soon wears away, and is succeeded by a comparative callousness, which is a perpetual surprise even to him who experiences it. In China there is always a social war, and everyone is too accustomed to its sickening effects, to give them more than a momentary attention. The *instinct* of relieving distress is an exotic unknown in China. A boy lying on a dunghill, in a fit, his swollen features covered with filth and flies, while the whole population of the village engage in their usual occupations in utter indifference—this is a type of wretchedness in many forms,

everywhere to be seen. This represents the stage in which help might save life, if help were to be had. The dead body of a boy lying in a field, half-devoured by dogs, even now engaged in taking their horrid meal, within half a mile of where twenty people are at work in the fields, this represents the latter stages when help is forever impossible. Each of these sights, seen on a journey in one of the central provinces, is, we must repeat, typical, and a comprehension of the causes of such phenomena is a comprehension of some of the deepest needs of the Chinese people.

It remains to speak of the most conspicuous of all the many exhibitions of the Chinese lack of sympathy, that, namely, which is to be found in their cruelty. It is popularly believed by the Chinese that the Mohammedans in China are more cruel than the Chinese themselves. However this may be, there can be no doubt in the mind of anyone who knows the Chinese, that they display an indifference to the sufferings of others, which is probably not to be matched in any other civilized country. That children at home are almost wholly ungoverned, has been already mentioned. Yet the moment their career of education is begun, the reign of mildness ceases. The Trimetrical Classic, the most general of the minor text-books of the Empire, contains a line to the effect that to teach without severity is a fault in a teacher. While this motto is very variously acted upon, according to the temperament of the pedagogue and the obtuseness of his pupils, great harshness is certainly common. We have seen a scholar fresh from a preceptor who was struggling to induct his pupils into the mysteries of examination essays, when the former presented the appearance of having been through a street fight, his head covered with wounds, and streaming with blood. It is not rare that pupils are thrown into fits from the abuse which they receive from angry teachers. On the other hand, it is not unusual for mothers whose children are so unfortunate as to be subject to fits, to beat them in those paroxysms, as an expression of the extreme disgust which such inconvenient attacks excite. It is not difficult to perceive that mothers who can beat children because they fall into convulsions, will treat any of their children with cruelty when irritated by special provocation.

The lot of Chinese concubines is one of exceeding bitterness. The homes in which they are to be found—happily relatively few

in number—are the scenes of incessant bickerings, and open warfare. One of the recent periodicals which has come to hand contains an article by a resident of China of wide experience containing the following passage: "The magistrate of the city in which I live was a wealthy man, a great scholar, a doctor of literature, an able administrator, well acquainted with all the good teachings in the classics; but he would lie, and curse, and rob, and torture people to any extent to gratify his evil passions. One of his concubines ran away; she was captured, brought back, stripped, hung up to a beam by her feet, and cruelly and severely beaten."

The governor of Honan, in a memorial published in the *Peking Gazette* a few years ago, showed incidentally that while there is responsibility in the eye of the law for the murder of a child by a parent, this is rendered nugatory by the provision that even if a married woman should wilfully and maliciously murder her young daughter-in-law the murderess may ransom herself by a money payment. The case reported was that in which a woman had burned the girl who was reared to become her son's wife with incense sticks, then roasted her cheeks with red-hot pincers, and finally boiled her to death with kettles full of scalding water. Other similar instances are referred to in the same memorial, the source of which places its authenticity beyond doubt. Such extreme barbarities are probable rare, but the cases of cruel treatment which are so aggravated as to lead to suicide, or to an attempt at suicide, are so frequent as to excite little more than passing comment. The writer is personally acquainted with many families in which these occurrences have taken place, and even while these lines are committed to paper, details of another instance are given by a mother, who wishes for sympathy in her trouble. In this case, the mother-in-law, whose family consisted only of herself, her son and her son's wife, exercised such a tyranny over the two latter, that they were never allowed to eat or to sleep together. If the son wished to please his mother, he did so by beating his wife. The latter being accused of having appropriated to her own use a skein of thread which did not belong to her, was so abused in consequence, that she threw herself into a well, whence she was rescued by her husband. Her mother brought her to the foreign home in which the mother was employed

as nurse, and the daughter having passed a few days in this seclusion, remarked, with a bitter reference to her previous abode, that "it was so peaceful that it seemed like heaven!"

The woes of daughters-in-law in China should form the subject rather for a chapter than for a brief paragraph. When it is remembered that all Chinese women marry, and generally marry young, being for a considerable part of their lives under the absolute control of a mother-in-law, some faint conception may be gained of the intolerable miseries of those daughters-in-law who live in families where they are abused. Parents can do absolutely nothing to protect their married daughters, other than remonstrating with the families into which they have married, and exacting an expensive funeral, if the daughters should be actually driven to suicide. If a husband should seriously injure, or even kill his wife, he might escape all legal consequences, by representing that she was "unfilial" to his parents. Suicides of young wives are, we must repeat, excessively frequent, and in some regions scarcely a group of villages can be found where they have not recently taken place. What can be more pitiful than a mother's reproaches to a married daughter, who has attempted suicide and been rescued; "Why didn't you die when you had a chance?"

There are some crimes committed in China for which the perpetrators are often not prosecuted before a magistrate, partly on account of the difficulty and the expense of securing a conviction, and partly because of the shame of publicity. Many cases of adultery are thus dealt with, by the law of private revenge. In such cases the offender is attacked by a large band of men, on the familiar Chinese principle that "when there are many persons, their prestige is great." Sometimes the man's legs are broken, sometimes his arms, and very often his eyes are destroyed by rubbing into them quick-lime. The writer has known several instances of this sort, and they are certainly not uncommon. A very intelligent Chinese, himself not unfamiliar with Occidental ways of thought, upon hearing a foreigner remonstrate against this practice as a refinement of cruelty, expressed unfeigned surprise, and remarked that in China this method of dealing with a criminal is thought to be "*extremely mild*" *as he is thus merely maimed for life, when he really ought to be killed!* It is rare to hear of any instances in which the victim of such outrages succeeds

in getting a complaint heard before a magistrate. The evidence against him would be overwhelming, and nine officials out of ten would probably consider that the man who had been thus dealt with deserved it all, and more. Even if the man were to win his case (theoretically) he would be no better off than before, but rather the worse, as the irritation of his neighbours would only be increased, and his life would not be safe.

It must be understood that despite the sacredness of human life in China, there are circumstances in which it is worth very little. One of the crimes which are most exasperating to the Chinese, is theft. In a crowded population always on the edge of ruin, this is regarded as a menace to society only less serious than murder. In the time of famine relief, one of the distributors found an insane woman, who had become a kleptomaniac, chained to a huge mill-stone as if she were a mad dog. If a person becomes known as a thief or in other ways is a public nuisance, he is in danger of being made away with by a summary process, not differing essentially from the vigilance committees of the early days of California. Sometimes this is done by stabbing, but the method most frequently adopted is burying alive. Doubtless there are those who suppose this expression to be a mere figure of speech, as when (according to some) one is said "to swallow gold." It is, on the contrary, a very serious reality. The writer is acquainted with four persons who were threatened with death in this form. In two instances they were bound as a preliminary, and in one case the pit was actually dug, and in all cases the burial was only prevented by the intervention of some older member of the attacking party. In another instance, occurring in a village where the writer is well acquainted, a young man who was known to be insane, was an incorrigible thief. A party of the villagers belonging to his own family only "consulted" (!) with his mother, and as the result of their deliberations, he was bound, a hole made in the ice covering the river flowing near the village, and the youth was dropped in. During the years in which the refluent waves of the great T'ai-p'ing rebellion overspread so large a part of China, the excitement was everywhere intense. At such times, a stranger had but to be suspected to be seized, and subjected to a rigorous examination. If he could give no account of himself which was satisfactory to his captors, it went hard with him. Within a few

hundred yards of the spot at which these lines are written, two such tragedies occurred, but little more than twenty years ago. The magistrates found themselves almost powerless to enforce the laws, and issued semi-official notifications to the people to seize all suspicious characters. The villagers saw a man coming on a horse, who looked as if he were a native of another province, and who failed to give adequate explanations of his antecedents. His bedding being found to be full of articles of jewellery, which he had evidently plundered from somewhere, the man was tied up, a pit was dug and the victim tumbled into it. While this was going on, another was seen racing across the fields, in a terrified manner, and it needed but the suggestion of some bystander that he was probably an accomplice, to secure for the second victim the same fate as the first. In some cases, the strangers were compelled to dig their own graves. Any native of the provinces of China principally affected by the lawlessness of those lawless times, old enough to recollect the circumstances, will testify that instances of this sort were too numerous to be remembered or counted. In the epoch of terror caused by the mysterious cutting off of queues, in the year 1877, an intense panic seemed to pervade a large part of the Empire, and there can be no doubt that many persons who were suspected were made away with in this manner. Such periods of panic are common to all races, under certain conditions, and must not be laid to the charge of the Chinese as a unique phenomenon. In order to understand these ebullitions, however, it is necessary to be fully aware of what the Chinese are capable when under no extraordinary excitement.

The following incident will illustrate the subject, only too well. It happened in a village within ten miles of which the writer lived for many years. The details were furnished by a resident of an adjacent village, himself a participator in some of the preliminary proceedings. Although it occurred thirty years ago, it is fresh in the memory of all the survivors of that generation for a distance of twenty miles around. The occurrence itself has given occasion to a rhyming proverb, constantly quoted. There is no doubt of any of the facts, though it is to be hoped that they are not easily to be matched, but on this point it is not possible to be sure. A man named Wang was notorious as a "blackleg," and a bad character. He lived in criminal intimacy with his son's

wife. He had incurred the enmity of all his neighbours far and near. But he was rich. He was the proprietor of a cash-shop in the district city, and was at the head of the local troops liable to be summoned by the district magistrate. He was a person of such importance, that when his mother died, the district magistrate himself attended the funeral, wrote on the tablet of the deceased the dot which alters the character for "King" into the character for "Lord," and also assisted at the sacrifices to the dead. A *protégé* of the man Wang got into a dispute about a basket-full of manure, which he had agreed to buy, but which some one else secured instead. The total value of the material was about fifteen cents. Having reviled the man who had bought his load of manure, the *protégé* was beaten. He fled to the man Wang, who at once took up his defence, and with the "village braves," attacked the family of the man who had beaten his *protégé*, inflicting severe injuries. The clan to which this family belonged, name Li, is a large one, and resolved to avenge the insult. They stealthily assembled time after time, only to find that their enemy had been warned, and secreted himself in the city, at his shop. After more than a year had elapsed, a secret message was brought to the Li family, that their enemy had ventured to visit his home. He was attacked at daybreak, and after a long resistance the house was broken into. Wang fought with fury, being a man of great strength and a graduate in military practice (Wu-hsiu-ts'ai). But he was overpowered by numbers, tied securely, and carried to a short distance from his home, his body covered with more than three hundred wounds, many of them severe. At first he had defied his assailants, reviling them with extreme bitterness, but finding himself at their mercy, he begged to be spared, offering any satisfaction which they might demand. But they were so thoroughly exasperated by his long and infamous career, as well as by his stout resistance, that they refused to listen to a word, and deliberately proceeded to dig his eyes out with a bamboo scraper. Finding this inadequate to their purpose, a pair of scissors was procured, thrust into each eye, and worked around, like a pestle in a mortar, until it was supposed he was forever incapacitated from identifying his assailants. But lest he should still testify against them, his savage foes tried to pull his tongue out, but failing in this, contented themselves with cutting it into strips, so as

to render speech impossible. A rain coming on, he was abandoned, but on looking back, it was perceived that he still had sufficient sight to distinguish the way to his house, toward which he was trying to crawl. Upon this, his enemies returned to the attack, repeated the process of gouging out his eyes, leaving him nearly lifeless. He was carried to the city, and soon after died in extreme agony. The outcome of the lawsuit, which was brought by his wretched wife, is instructive. A single member of the Li family came forward and voluntarily surrendered himself, avowing that he alone had done the deed. He was repeatedly examined by the magistrate, who of course was quite aware of the real facts. This official, who was well pleased to be rid of so formidable an enemy, temporised with the case, merely beating the confessed murderer a few times on the mouth. He was kept in the prison of the yamên of the district magistrate for three years and then released. Thus terminated the career of a local bully. It is probable that the occasion of many of the "clan fights" for which the southern provinces are distinguished, bears some resemblance to this case.

The last example to be named of conspicuous "absence of sympathy," on the part of the Chinese, is their system of punishments. It is not easy from an examination of the legal code of the Empire, to ascertain what is and what is not in accordance with law, for custom seems to have sanctioned many deviations from the letter of the statutes. One of the most significant of these is the enormous number of blows with the bamboo which are constantly resorted to, often ten times the number named in the law, and sometimes one hundred times as many. We have no space even to mention the dreadful tortures which are inflicted upon Chinese prisoners, in the name of justice. They may be found enumerated in any good work on China, such as *The Middle Kingdom*, or *Huc's Travels*. The latter author mentions seeing prisoners on the way to the yamên, with their hands nailed to the cart in which they were conveyed, because the constables had forgotten to bring fetters. It is impossible for a foreigner, remembering what the late Sir Harry Parkes and his comrades suffered in the yamên of the Board of Punishments in Peking, and reflecting on the scenes of which this terrible tribunal must be the constant witness, to pass the entrance of that prison without a

shudder. Nothing so illustrates the proposition that though the Chinese have "bowels" they certainly have no "mercies," as the deliberate, routine cruelty with which all Chinese prisoners are treated, who cannot pay for their exemption. It is less than a year since the press of Shanghai chronicled the infliction upon two old prisoners in the yamên of the district magistrate of that city, of a sentence for levying black-mail on a new prisoner. They received between two thousand and three thousand blows with the bamboo, and had their ankles broken with an iron hammer. Is it strange that the Chinese adage advises the dead to keep out of hell and the living to keep out of yamêns? *

Since the preceding paragraphs were written, an expected confirmation of some of the statements made has appeared from a most unimpeachable source. The following is an extract from a translation of the *Peking Gazette* of 7th February, 1888. Comment is superfluous:—

"The Governor of Yünnan states that in some of the country districts of that province the villagers have a horrible custom of burning to death any man caught stealing corn or fruits in the fields. They at the same time compel the man's relations to sign a document giving their consent to what is done, and then make them light the fire with their own hands, so as to deter them from lodging a complaint afterwards. Sometimes the horrible penalty is exacted for the breaking of a single branch or stalk, or even false accusations are made and men put to death out of spite. This terrible practice, which seems incredible when heard, came into use during the time of the Yünnan rebellion; and the constant efforts of the authorities have not succeeded in extirpating it since. Last autumn a case of the kind occurred in the Ch'ü-ching prefecture. One evening a man named Pêng Chao-sheng was going down to watch his own field. His path led him along the side

* A Chinese who is practising law in the United States, Mr. Hang Yen-chang, in an article on the administration of the law in China published in the *Christian Union*, a leading religious journal, quotes what has been hereinbefore said of the Chinese "Absence of Nerves," remarking that the punishments of the Chinese are not regarded by themselves as cruel. While we are unable to agree with this view, it must not be forgotten that the Chinese being what they are, their laws and their customs being as they are, it would probably be wholly impracticable to introduce any essential amelioration of their punishments, without a thorough-going reformation of the Chinese people as individuals. Physical force cannot safely be abandoned, until some moral force is at hand, adequate to take its place.

of a patch of maize belonging to another man. As he passed he pulled off a head of corn. The owner saw him and shouted out, upon which he dropped the corn and fled. The owner went and told his landlord, upon which the latter proposed that the pilferer should be burned. The two men having agreed, next morning they laid the matter before an assembly of the villagers. As the matter was so trifling, some advised that it should be let drop, but their opinion was not listened to. On the following day the two men seized their victim and bound him. The poor man's mother came with all her relations and begged for mercy. She offered to make atonement by forfeiting the whole of her property to the community; but all she could say was of no avail. The men refused to give way, and ordered her to give her consent to the murder in writing, threatening her that otherwise they would put her to death also. Overcome by fear she asked a stranger, a travelling doctor, who cannot be identified, to write the required paper for her. They then piled up a heap of brushwood in an empty place outside the village, and the next day at noon carried the man out and laid him bound upon it. The woman was compelled to set fire to the faggots, and her son was burnt to death. Afterwards, as soon as she could, she stole away to the town and gave information to the authorities. The two men were immediately arrested. One of them, the landlord, died in prison, but the other was sent to the provincial capital for trial. The memorialist finds that in the fifteenth year of Ch'ien Lung (A.D. 1750), at the request of the Governor of Szechuan, it was decreed that in the case of any person being burnt to death by a body of men, the principal offender should be executed by the lingering process and participants in the crime be beheaded. The landlord, who in this case was the principal, has already died. His fellow offender has been condemned to immediate decapitation, and the sentence has been carried into effect without delay."

Within a few weeks of the appearance of this memorial in the *Peking Gazette*, one of the leading Chinese newspapers contained a detailed account of a custom which is said to exist in the district of Lien-chiang, situated within the jurisdiction of the prefecture of Foochow. "If a woman's husband die, his relations insist upon her committing suicide by hanging, so as to follow him into another world. Three days before the date appointed for

this enforced suttee, a feast is given, at which all the man's relations use every argument and exhortation to make her comply with the custom. Should she consent, as she is invariably compelled to do, she is placed in a sedan-chair, and carried in a pompous procession to the sound of gongs and other musical instruments through all the principal streets, to a platform previously prepared, several tens of feet in height, up which she is carried and placed seated on a chair. The relations and friends down below now *k'o-t'ou* and salute the victim, and it is customary even for officials to proceed thither to make a salutation. When this ceremony is over, a rope is suspended from a beam, the widow places it round her own neck, and one of her brothers pulls the end with all his strength and strangles her. This done, she is buried, and an application is made to the Emperor for some mark of honour to be bestowed, to commemorate her sacrifice, which is falsely reported as a voluntary one. Hence there is scarcely a family in Lien-chiang, which cannot boast of a 'virtuous widow,' and the whole country is studded with *p'ai-lous* erected in their honour. Some tens of years ago, it is recorded that a new prefect who arrived to administer this part of the country, was much amazed when he heard of this custom; and receiving soon after his arrival an invitation to be present at such a function, and to make a *k'o-t'ou* in full official dress, he at first declined, but being urged by the gentry and elders to go, he determined to be present on this one occasion to see what would happen. As soon as he had made his reverence, however, the widow on the platform began to cry out and to stamp, giving every evidence that she died no willing victim. Moved to violent indignation at the sight, the good prefect arrested her elder relations, neighbours and the local constable, and administered several hundred blows with the bamboo to each, the husband's father being cangued in addition, and the mother being beaten on the mouth. The prefect issued a proclamation stringently forbidding such enforced suttees for the future, but this was only obeyed in the immediate vicinity of the city, and produced no reformation in the country a little removed." "Alas," says the paper from which this is translated, "Why has no energetic official again exerted himself to stop this cruel practice?"

China has many needs, among which her leading statesmen places armies, navies, and arsenals. To her foreign well-wishers it

is plain that she needs a currency, railways, and scientific instruction. But does not a deeper diagnosis of the conditions of the Empire indicate that one of her profoundest needs is more human sympathy? She needs to feel that sympathy with childhood, which for eighteen centuries has been one of the choicest possessions of races and peoples which once knew it not. She needs to feel sympathy for wives and for mothers, a sympathy which eighteen centuries have done so much to develop and to deepen. She needs to feel sympathy for man as man, to learn that quality of mercy which droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven, twice blest in blessing him that gives and him that takes, that divine compassion which Seneca declared to be "a vice of the mind" but which the influence of Christianity has cultivated, until it has become the fairest plant that ever bloomed upon the earth, the virtue in the exercise of which man most resembles God.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPECT FOR LAW.

ONE of the most distinctive features of Chinese society is that which is epitomized in the word "responsibility," a word which carries with it a significance, and embraces a wealth of meaning to which Western lands are total strangers. In those lands, as we well know, the individual is the unit, and the nation is a large collection of individuals. In China the unit of social life is found in the family, the village or the clan, and these are often convertible terms. Thousands of Chinese villages comprise exclusively persons having the same surname, and the same ancestors. The inhabitants have lived in the same spot ever since they began to live at all, and trace an unbroken descent for many hundred years back to the last great political upheaval, such as the overthrow of the Ming dynasty, or its establishment under Hung Wu. In such a village there can be no relationship laterally more distant than "cousin," and every male member of an older generation is either a father, an uncle, or some kind of a "grandmother." Sometimes eleven generations are represented in the same small hamlet. This does not imply, as might be supposed, extreme old age on the part of any representative of the older generations. The Chinese marry young, marry repeatedly, often late in life, and constantly adopt children. The result is such a tangle among relatives, that without special enquiry and minute attention to the particular characters which are employed in writing the names of all who belong to the same "generation," it is impossible to determine who constitute "the rising generation," and who form the generation which rose long ago. An old man nearly seventy years of age affirms that a young man of thirty is his "grandfather." All the numerous "cousins" of the same generation are termed "brothers," and if the perplexed foreigner insists

upon accuracy, and enquires whether they are "own brothers," he will not infrequently be enlightened with the reply that they are "own *brother-cousins.*" The writer once proposed a question of this sort, and after some little hesitation the person addressed replied, "Why, yes, *you might call them own brothers.*"

These items are but particulars under the general head of the "social solidarity" of the Chinese, to which a very inadequate chapter has been already devoted. It is this solidarity, which forms the substratum upon which rests Chinese responsibility. The father is responsible for his son, not merely until the latter attains to "years of discretion," but as long as life lasts, and the son is responsible for his father's debts. The elder brother has a definite responsibility for the younger brother, and the "head of the family"—usually the oldest representative of the oldest generation—has his responsibility for the whole family or clan. What these responsibilities actually are, will depend, however, upon circumstances.

Customs vary widely, and the "personal equation" is a most important factor, of which mere theory takes no account. Thus in a large and influential family, embracing many literary men, some of whom are local magnates, and perhaps graduates, the "head of the clan" may be an addle-headed old man, who can neither read nor write, and who has never in his life been ten miles from home.

The influence of an elder brother over a younger, or indeed of any older member over a younger member of the same family, is of the most direct and positive sort, and is entirely irreconcilable with what we mean by personal liberty. The younger brother is employed as a servant, and wishes to give up his place, but his elder brother will not let him do so. The younger brother wishes to buy a winter garment, but his elder brother thinks the expense is too great, and will not allow him to incur the expense. Even while these remarks are committed to paper, a case is reported in which a Chinese has a number of rare old coins, which a foreigner desires to purchase. Lest the owner should refuse to sell—as is the Chinese way, when one happens to have what another wants—the middleman who made the discovery, proposes to the foreigner that he should send to *the uncle* of the owner of the coins a present of foreign candy and other trifles, by which oblique

means such pressure will be brought to bear upon the owner of the coins that he will be obliged to give them up! There is a burlesque tale of an origin to us unknown, which relates that a traveller in a Western land once came upon a very old man with a long white beard, who was crying bitterly. Struck with the singularity of this spectacle, the stranger halted and asked the old man what he was crying about, and was surprised to be told that it was because his father had just whipped him! "Where is your father?" "Over there," was the reply. Riding in the direction named, the traveller found a much older man, with a beard much longer and whiter than the other. "Is that your son?" asked the traveller. "Yes, it is." "Did you whip him?" "Yes, I did." "Why?" "Because he was saucy to his grandfather, and if he does it again I will whip him some more!" Translated into the conditions of Chinese life, the burlesque disappears.

Next in order to the responsibility of members of a family for each other, comes the mutual responsibility of neighbours for neighbours. Whether these "neighbours" are or are not related, makes no difference in their responsibility, which depends solely upon proximity. This responsibility is based upon the theory that virtue and vice are contagious. Good neighbours will make good neighbours, and bad neighbours will make others like them. The mother of Mencius removed three times, in order to reach a desirable neighbourhood. To an Occidental fresh from the republican ideas which dominate the Anglo-Saxons, it seems a matter of little or no consequence who his neighbours are, and if he be a resident of a city he may occupy a dwelling for a year, in ignorance even of the name of the family next door. But in China it is otherwise. If a crime takes place, the neighbours are held guilty of something analogous to what English law calls "misprision of treason," in that when they knew of a criminal intention, they did not report it. It is vain to reply "I did not know." You are a "neighbour," and therefore you must have known. The proceedings which are taken when the crime of killing a parent has been committed, furnish a striking illustration of the Chinese theory of responsibility. As has been already mentioned in speaking of filial piety, in such instances, the criminal is often alleged to be insane, as indeed, one must be who voluntarily subjects himself to "death by the slicing process," when he

might escape it by suicide. In a memorial published in the *Peking Gazette* a few years since, the governor of one of the central provinces reported in regard to a case of parricide that he had had the houses of all the neighbours pulled down, on the ground of their gross dereliction of duty in not exerting a good moral and reformatory influence over the criminal! Such a proceeding would probably strike an average Chinese as eminently reasonable. In some instances, when this crime has occurred in a district, in addition to all the punishments of persons, the city wall itself is pulled down in parts, or modified in shape, a round corner substituted for a square one, or a gate removed to a new situation, or even closed up altogether. If the crime should be repeated several times in the same district, it is said that the whole city would be razed to the ground, and a new one founded elsewhere, but of this we have met with no certain examples.

Next above the neighbours comes the village constable or bailiff (*ti-pao*), whose functions are of a most miscellaneous nature, sometimes confined to a single village, and sometimes extending to many. In either case he is the medium of communication between the local magistrate and the people, and is always liable to get into trouble from any one of innumerable causes, and may be beaten to a jelly by a captious official, for not reporting what he could not possibly have known.

At a vast elevation above the village constables, stand the district magistrates, who, so far as the people are concerned, are by far the most important officers in China. As regards the people below them, they are tigers. As regards the officials above them, they are mice. A single local magistrate combines functions which ought to be distributed among at least six different officers. Many of them have no interest whatever in the business which they despatch, except to extract from it all that it can be made to yield, and from the nature of their miscellaneous and incongruous duties, they are largely dependent upon their secretaries and other subordinates. Having so much to do, even with the best intentions, these officials cannot fail to take numerous mistakes, and many things must go wrong, for which they will be held responsible. The district magistrate is called the *chih-hsien*, or the one who "knows the district," and like all Chinese officials

he is supposed to have an exhaustive acquaintance with everything within his jurisdiction which is an object of knowledge, and an unlimited capacity to prevent what ought to be prevented. To facilitate this knowledge, and that of the local constables, each city and village is divided into compound atoms, composed of ten families each. At every door hangs a placard or tablet upon which is inscribed the name of the head of the family, and the number of individuals which it comprises. This system of registration, analogous to the old Saxon tithings and hundreds, makes it easy to fix local responsibility. The moment a suspicious stranger appears in the district comprised in a tithing, he is promptly reported to the head of the tithing by whoever sees him first. By the head of the tithing he is immediately reported to the local constable, and by the local constable to the district magistrate, who at once takes steps "rigorously to seize and severely to punish." By the same simple process all local crimes, not due to "suspicious looking strangers" but to permanent residents, are instantly detected before they have hatched into overt acts, and thus the pure morals of the people are preserved from age to age.

It is evident that such regulations as these can be efficient only in a state of society where fixity of residence is the rule. It is also evident that even in China, where the most extreme form of permanence of abode is found, the system of tithing is to a large extent a mere legal fiction. Sometimes a city, where no one remembers to have seen them before, suddenly blossoms out with ten-family tablets on every door-post, which indicated the arrival of a district magistrate who intends to enforce the regulations. In some places these tablets are observable in the winter season only, for this is the time when bad characters are most numerous, and most dangerous. But so far as our knowledge extends, the system as such is little more than a theoretical reminiscence, and even when observed, it is probably merely a form. Practically, it is not generally observed, and in some provinces at least, one may traved for a thousand miles, and for months together, and not find ten-family tablets posted in more than one per cent. of the cities and villages along the route.

It may be mentioned in passing, that the Chinese tithing system is intimately connected with the so-called census. If each doorway exhibits an accurate list, constantly corrected, of the

number of persons in each family; if each local constable has accurate copies of the lists of all the tithings within his territory; if each district magistrate has at his disposal accurate summaries of all these items, it is as easy to secure a complete and accurate census of the Empire, as to do a long sum in addition, for the whole is equal to the aggregate of all its parts. But these are large *ifs*, and as a matter of fact, none of the conditions are realized. The tablets are non-existent, and when the local magistrate is occasionally called upon for the totals which should represent them, neither he nor the numerous constables upon whom he is entirely dependent, has the least interest in securing accuracy, which indeed from the nature of the case is difficult. *There is no squeeze to be got from a census*, and for this reason alone, a real Chinese census is a mere figment of the imagination. Even in the most enlightened Western lands, the notion that a census means taxation appears to be ineradicable, but in China the suspicion which it excites is so strong, that for this reason alone, unless the tithing system were carried out with uniform faithfulness in all places and at all times, an accurate enumeration would be impossible.

For a local magistrate to be guilty of all kinds of misdemeanours, for which he gets into no trouble whatever, or getting into it escapes scot free by means of influential friends, or by a judicious expenditure of silver, and yet after all to lose his post on account of something which had happened within his jurisdiction which he could not have prevented, is a constant occurrence.

How the system of responsibility operates in the domain of all the successive grades of officials, it is unnecessary to illustrate in detail. Multiplied examples may be found in almost every copy of the translations from the *Peking Gazette*. A case was mentioned a few months ago, where a soldier on guard had stolen some thirty boxes of bullets placed in his care, and sold them to a tinner, who supposed them to be condemned and surplus stores. The soldier was beaten one hundred blows, and banished to the frontiers of the Empire in penal servitude. A petty officer whose duty it was to inspect the stores, was condemned to eighty blows, and dismissed from the sevice, though allowed to commute his punishment for a money payment. The purchasers of the material were considered innocent of any blame, but were beaten forty

blows of the light bamboo, on general principles. The lieutenant in charge was cashiered, in order to be put upon trial for his "connivance," in the theft, but he judiciously disappeared. The Board to which the memorial was addressed was requested to determine the penalty to be inflicted upon the general in command, for his share in the matter. Thus each individual is a link in a chain, which is followed up to the very end, and no link can escape by pleading ignorance or inability to prevent the crime.

Still more characteristic examples of Chinese responsibility are furnished by the memorials annually appearing in the *Peking Gazette*, reporting the outbreak of some irrepressible river. In the case of a flood in the Yung-ting-ho in the province of Chihli during the summer of 1888, the waters came down from the mountains with the velocity of a mill-race. The officials seem to have been promptly on hand, and to have risked their lives in struggling to do what was utterly beyond the powers of man. They were helpless as ants under a rain spout during a summer torrent. But this did not prevent Li Hung-chang from requesting that they should be immediately stripped of their buttons, or deprived of their rank without being removed from their posts (a favourite mode of expressing Imperial dissatisfaction), and the governor-general consistently concludes his memorial with the usual request that his own name should be sent to the Board of Punishments for the determination of a penalty to be inflicted upon him for his complicity in the affair. In like manner the recent failure of the embankments built to bring back the Yellow River into its old channel, was the signal for the degradation and banishment of a great number of officers, from the governor of the province of Honan downward.

The theory of responsibility is carried upwards with unflinching consistency to the son of Heaven himself. It is no unusual thing for the Emperor in published edicts to confess to Heaven his shortcomings, taking upon himself the blame of floods, famines, and revolutionary outbreaks, for which he begs Heaven's forgiveness. His responsibility to Heaven is as real as that of his officers to himself. If the Emperor loses his throne, it is because he has already lost "Heaven's decree," which is presumptively transferred to whoever can hold the Empire.

That aspect of the Chinese doctrine of responsibility which is the most repellent to Western standards of thought, is found in the Oriental practice of extinguishing an entire family for the crime of one of its members. Many instances of this sort were reported in connection with the T'aip'ing rebellion, and more recently the family of the chieftain Yakub Beg, who led the Mohammedan rebellion in Turkestan, furnished another. These atrocities are not, however, limited to cases of overt rebellion. In the year 1873 "a Chinese was accused and convicted of having broken open the grave of a relative of the Imperial family, in order to rob the coffin of certain gold, silver and jade ornaments, which had been buried in it. The entire family of the criminal, consisting of four generations, from a man more than ninety years of age to a female infant only a few months old was exterminated. Thus eleven persons suffered death for the offence of one. And there was no evidence to show that any of them were parties to, or were even aware of his crime."

The Chinese theory and practice of responsibility has been often cited as one of the causes of the perpetuity of Chinese institutions. It forges around every member of Chinese society iron fetters from which it is impossible that he should break loose. It constantly violates every principle of justice, by punishing all grades of officers, as well as private individuals, for occurrences in which they had no part, and of which, as in the example just cited, they were not improbably utterly ignorant. It is the direct cause of deliberate and systematic falsification in all ranks of officials, from the very lowest to the very highest. It is not in human nature to give truthful reports of events, when, in consequence of such reports, the person who makes them may be severely and unjustly punished. The abuse of this principle alone would suffice to account for a large part of the maladministration of justice in China, to which our attention is so often called. Still, while we are impressed with flagrant violations of justice, which it involves, it is impossible to be blind to its excellencies. In Western lands where everyone is supposed to be innocent until he is proved to be guilty, it is exceedingly difficult to fix responsibility upon any particular person. A bridge breaks down with a heavy train of cars loaded with passengers, and an investigation fails to find anyone in fault. A lofty building

falls, and crushes scores of people, and while the architect is criticized, he shows that he did the best he could with the means at his disposal, and no one ever hears of his being punished. If an ironclad capsize, or a military campaign is ruined because the proper preparations were not made, or not made in time, eloquent speeches set forth the defects of the system which renders such events possible, but no one is punished. The Chinese are far behind us in their conceptions of public justice, but might we not wisely learn again from them the ancient lesson that everyone should be held rigidly responsible for his own acts, in order to the security of the body politic?

The relation of the Chinese theory of responsibility to foreigners in China is a topic with which we are all familiar. The "boy" into whose hands everything is committed, and who must produce every spoon, fork or curio; the steward who takes general charge of your affairs, suffering no one but himself to cheat you, the compradore who wields vast powers but who is individually responsible for every piece of property and for everyone of hundreds of coolies—these types of character we still have with us, and shall always have, as long as we have anything to do with the Chinese. Innkeepers in China are not noted for flagrant virtues of any kind, especially for consideration toward foreign travellers. Yet we have known of a Chinese innkeeper who ran half a mile after a foreigner, bringing an empty sardine-tin which he supposed to be a forgotten valuable. He knew that he was responsible, unlike American hotel-keepers who coolly notify their guests that "the proprietor is not responsible for boots left in the hall to be blacked."

Responsibility for the character, behaviour and debts of those when they recommend or introduce is a social obligation of recognized force, and one which it behoves foreigners dealing with Chinese to emphasize. The fact that a headman, whatever his position, is "responsible" for any and every act of omission or commission of all his subordinates, exerts over the whole series of links in the chain, a peculiar influence, which has been instinctively appreciated by foreigners in all the long history of their dealings with Chinese. There is a tradition of a head compradore in a bank, who in the "more former days" was called to account, because the "boy" had allowed a mosquito to insinuate himself

within the mosquito-net of the bank manager! If the Chinese perceive that a foreigner is ignorant of the responsibilities of his employees, or disregards it, it will not take them long to act upon this discovery in extremely disagreeable ways.

One of the many admirable qualities of the Chinese is their innate respect for law. Whether this element in their character is the effect of their institutions, or the cause of them, we do not know. But what we do know is, that the Chinese are by nature and by education a law-abiding people. Reference has been already made to this trait in speaking of the national virtue of patience, but it deserves special notice in connection with Chinese theories of mutual responsibility. In China every man, woman and child is directly responsible to some one else, and of this important fact no one for a moment loses sight. Though one should "go far and fly high" he cannot escape, and this he well knows. Even if he should himself escape, his family cannot escape. The certainty of this does not indeed make a bad man good, but it frequently prevents him from becoming ten-fold worse.

Contrast the Chinese inherent respect for law with the spirit often manifested where republican institutions flourish most, and manifested it must be said by those whose antecedents would least lead us to expect it—college laws, municipal ordinances, state and national enactments, are quietly defied, as if the assertion of personal liberty were one of the greatest needs, instead of one of the principal dangers of the time. It is rightly regarded as one of the most serious indictments against the Chinese transaction of public business of all kinds, that everyone not only connives at acts of dishonesty which it is his duty to prevent and to expose, but that such is the constitution of public and private society that everyone must connive at such acts. But is it less disgraceful that in Christian countries men of education and refinement, as well as the uncultivated, quietly ignore, or deliberately disregard the laws of the land, as if by common consent, and as if it were now a well ascertained fact, that a law is more honoured in the breach than in the observance? How shall we explain or defend the existence upon our statute books of multitudinous laws which are neither repealed nor enforced, laws which by their anomalous non-existent existence, tend to bring all legislation into a common contempt? By what means shall we explain the alarming increase

of crime in many Western lands, during the last thirty years? How shall we explain that conspicuous indifference to the sacredness of human life, which is unquestionably a characteristic of some Western lands? It is vain to dogmatize in regard to matters which from the nature of the case are beyond the reach of statistics. Still we must confess to a decided conviction that human life is safer in a Chinese city than in an American city—safer in Peking, than in New York. We believe it to be safer for a foreigner to traverse the interior of China, than for a Chinese to traverse the interior of the United States. It must be remembered that the Chinese as a whole are quite as ignorant as any body of immigrants in the United States, and not less prejudiced. They are, as we constantly see, ideal material for mobs. The wonder is, not that such outbreaks take place, but that they have not occurred more frequently and have not been more fatal to the lives of foreigners.

It is a Chinese tenet that heaven is influenced by the acts and by the spirit of human beings. Upon this principle depends the efficacy of the self-mutilation on behalf of parents, to which reference was made in speaking of filial piety. That this is a correct theory we are not prepared to maintain, yet certain facts deserve mention which might seem to support it. The geographical situation and extent of the eighteen provinces of China bear a marked resemblance to that part of the United States of America east of the Rocky Mountains. The erratic eccentricities of the climate of the United States are, as little Marjorie Fleming remarked of the multiplication table, "more than human nature can bear." It was Hawthorne who observed of New England, that it has "no climate, but only samples." Contrast the weather in Boston, New York or Chicago, with that of places in the same latitude in China. It is not that China is not, as the geographies used to affirm of the United States, "subject to extremes of heat and cold," for in the latitude of Peking the thermometer ranges through about one hundred degrees Fahrenheit, which ought to afford sufficient variety of temperature to any mortal. But in China these alternations of heat and cold do not follow one another with that reckless and incalculable lawlessness witnessed in the great republic, but with an even and unruffled sequence suited to an ancient and a patriarchal system.

The Imperial almanac is the authorized exponent of the threefold harmony subsisting in China between heaven, earth and man. Whether the Imperial almanac is equally trustworthy in all parts of the Emperor's broad domain, we do not know, but in those regions with which we happen to be familiar, the almanac is itself a signal-service. At the point marked for the establishment of spring, spring appears. In several different years we have remarked that the day on which the "establishment of autumn" fell was distinguished by a marked change in the weather, after which the blistering heats of "summer," returned no more. Instead of allowing the frost to make irregular and devastating irruptions in every month of the year—as is too often the case in lands where "democracy" rules—the Chinese calendar fixes one of its four-and-twenty "terms" as "frost-fall." A few years ago, this "term" fell on the 23rd of October. Up to that day no lightest frost had fallen. On the morning of that day the ground was covered with white frost, and continued to be so covered every morning thereafter. We have noted these correspondences for some years, and have seldom observed a variation of more than the usual three days of grace, with the exception of the year 1888 in the northern part of Honan, where frost fell eleven days in advance of schedule time. But further enquiry showed that this was a purely local irregularity, undoubtedly due to the depraving influence of the great breach in the Yellow River only a few miles distant. With the resumption of Imperial control over this errant stream, these breaches of climatic uniformity may be expected to disappear.

It is not inanimate nature only which in China is amenable to reason and to law, but animated nature as well. For some years we have noticed that on a particular day in early spring the window frames were adorned with several flies, where for many months no flies had been seen, and on each occasion we have turned to the Imperial almanac with a confidence justified by the event, and ascertained that this particular day was the one assigned for the "stirring of insects"! It has been remarked that there is in the blood of the English-speaking race a certain lawlessness, which makes us intolerant of rules and restless under restraints. "Our sturdy English ancestors," says Blackstone, "held it beneath the condition of a freeman to appear, or to do any other act, at the precise time appointed." But for this trait of our doughty

forefathers, the doctrine of personal liberty, and the rights of man, might have waited long for assertion.

But now that these rights have got themselves tolerably well established, might we not judiciously lay somewhat more emphasis upon the importance of subordinating the individual will to the public good and upon the majesty of law? And in these directions have we not something to learn from the Chinese?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MUTUAL SUSPICION.

It is an indisputable truth that without a certain amount of mutual confidence, it is impossible for mankind to exist in an organized society, especially in a society so highly organized and so complex as that of China. Assuming this as an axiom, it is not the less necessary to direct our attention to a series of phenomena, which, however inharmonious they may appear with our theory, are sufficiently real to those who are acquainted with China. Much of what we shall have to say of the mutual suspicion of the Chinese is by no means peculiar to this people, but is rather a trait which they share in common with all Orientals, yet the manifestations of which are doubtless much modified by the genius of Chinese institutions. The whole subject is intimately connected with that of mutual responsibility, which has been already discussed. Nothing is more likely to excite the suspicion, not of the Chinese only, but of any human being, than the danger that he may be held to account for something which has no concern whatever with himself, but the consequences of which may be most serious.

The first manifestation of the chronic suspicion prevailing in China, which attracts the attention of a stranger, is the existence in all parts of the Empire of lofty walls which enclose all cities. The fact that the word for city is in Chinese the equivalent for a walled city, is as significant as the fact that in the Latin language the word which denoted army, also meant drill or practice. The laws of the Empire require that every district city, as well as every city of a higher rank, shall be enclosed by a wall of a specified height. Like other laws, this statute is much neglected in the letter, for there are many cities the walls of which are allowed to crumble into such decay, that they are no protection whatever, and we know of one district city invested by the T'ai-p'ing rebels and occupied by them for many months, the walls of which although utterly

destroyed were not restored at all for more than a decade afterwards. Many cities have only a feeble mud rampart, quite inadequate to keep out even the native dogs, which climb over it at will. But in all these cases, the occasion of these lapses from the ideal state of things is simply the poverty of the country. Whenever there is an alarm of trouble, the first step is to repair the walls. The execution of such repairs affords a convenient way in which to fine officials or others who have made themselves too rich in too short a time.

The firm foundation on which rest all the many city walls in China, is the *distrust* which the Government entertains of the people. However the Emperor may be in theory the father of his people, and his subordinates called "father and mother officials," all parties understand perfectly that these are purely technical terms, like *plus* and *minus*, and that the real relation between the people and their rulers is that between children and a step-father. The whole history of China appears to be dotted with rebellions, most of which might apparently have been prevented by proper action on the part of the general Government if taken in time. The Government does not expect to act in time. Perhaps it does not wish to do so, or perhaps it is prevented from doing so. Meantime, the people slowly rise as the Government knew they would, and the officials promptly retire within these ready-made fortifications, like a turtle within its shell, or a hedge-hog within its ball of quills, and the disturbance is left to the slow adjustment of the troops.

The lofty walls which enclose all premises in Chinese, as in other Oriental cities and towns, are another exemplification of the same traits of suspicion. If it is embarrassing for a foreigner to know how to speak to a Chinese of such places as London or New York, without unintentionally conveying the notion that they are "walled cities," it is not less difficult to make Chinese who may be interested in Western lands, understand how it can be that in those countries people often have about their premises no enclosures whatever. The immediate, although unwarranted inference on the part of the Chinese is that in such countries there must be no bad characters of any kind.

The almost universal massing of the rural Chinese population in villages, which are in reality miniature cities, is another

illustration of the trait of mutual suspicion. The object is protection, not from a foreign enemy, but from one another. The only exceptions to this mode of agglomeration of Chinese dwellings, with which we are acquainted, is in the case of some mountainous regions where the land is so barren that it is incapable of supporting more than one or two families, the people being so poor that they have no dread of thieves, and the province of Szechuan, in which, as Mr. Baber mentions, "the farmer and his workpeople live, it may be said, invariably in farm-houses on their land, and the tendency is to the separation rather than to the congregation of dwellings." If this exception to the general rule was made, because the expectation of peace in that remote province was thought to be greater than in others, as Baron von Richthofen suggested, it has proved, as Mr. Baber remarks, an expectation which has suffered many and grievous disappointments, especially —although after a long previous peace—in the days of the T'ai-p'ing rebels.

A most significant illustration of the Chinese, and also Oriental, suspicion found in social life is to be seen in the theory and practice in regard to woman. What that theory is, is sufficiently well known. While Chinese women have incomparably more liberty than their sisters in Turkey or in India,* Chinese respect for women cannot be rated as high. Universal ignorance on the part of women, universal subordination, the existence of polygamy and concubinage—these are not good preparations for that respect for womanhood, which is one of the fairest characteristics of Western civilization. It would be easy to cite popular expressions in illustration of the views which the Chinese hold of women in general, and which may be regarded as the generations of long experience. She is spoken of as if it is her nature to be mean, short-sighted, and not to be trusted—she is considered to be an incarnation of jealousy, as in the phrase, "it is impossible to be more jealous than a woman," where the word "jealous" suggests,

* The existence of this liberty, is not, however, to be judged of by superficial indications. A lady who resided for some years in the Indian city of Delhi, and subsequently at the capital of the province of Shansi, remarked that fewer Chinese women were ordinarily to be seen upon the streets of the latter city, than Indian women upon the streets of the former one. Yet this circumstance does not at all conflict with the truth of the statement to which this note is appended.

and is intended to suggest another word meaning "poisonous" which has the same sound. This theory is well embodied in a verse of ancient Chinese poetry, of which the following lines are a translation:—

"The serpent's mouth in the green bamboo,
The yellow hornet's caudal dart;
Little the injury these can do;
More venomous far is a woman's heart."

These views are incidentally exemplified with a fine and unconscious impartiality in the very structure of the Chinese language, in a manner to which attention has been often directed. An excellent scholar in Chinese in response to a request from the writer, examined with care a list of one hundred and thirty-five of the more common characters which are written with the radical denoting woman, and found that fourteen of them conveyed a meaning which might be classed as "good," such as the words "good," "skilful," and the like; of the remainder, thirty-five are bad, and eighty-six indifferent in meaning. But those classed as bad, contain some of the most disreputable words in the whole language. The radical for woman combined with that denoting shield signifies "deceitful, fraudulent, villainous, traitorous, selfish;" while three women in combination convey the ideas of "fornication, adultery, seduction, to intrigue."

There are said to be two reasons why people do not trust one another, first because they do not know each other, and second because they do. The Chinese think that they have each of these reasons for mistrust. And they act accordingly. While the Chinese are gifted with a capacity for combination, which at times seems to suggest the union of chemical atoms, it is easy to ascertain by careful enquiry at the proper sources and at the proper times, that the Chinese do not by any means trust one another in the implicit way which the external phenomena might imply. Members of the same family are constantly the victims of mutual suspicion, which is fanned by the women who have married into the family, and who as sisters-in-law are able to do much, and who frequently do what they can, to foment jealously between their husbands in regard to the division of the proceeds of the common labour. To this topic reference was made in speaking of what we have called "social typhoons."

Not to enlarge upon this aspect of domestic life, which by itself might occupy a chapter, we pass to the notice of the same general state of things among those who are not united by the complex ties of Chinese family life. A company of servants in a family often stand to one another in a relation of what may be called armed neutrality, that is, if they have not been introduced by some one who is responsible for them all. If anything comes out to the disadvantage of anyone of them, his first question to himself is not, "How did the master find that out?" but "*Who told him* of me?" Even if the servant is well aware that his guilt has been proved, his first thought will be to show that some other servant had a grudge against him. We have known a Chinese woman to change colour and leave a room in great dudgeon on hearing loud voices in the yard, because she supposed that as there was an angry discussion, it *must* be about her, whereas the matter was in relation to a pile of millet stalks bought for fuel, for which a dealer demanded too high a price. It is this kind of suspicion which fans the fires of dissension, which are almost sure to arise when a servant has been unexpectedly discharged. He suspects everyone but himself, is certain that some one has been speaking ill of him, insists upon being told the allegations against him, although he knows that there are half a score of reasons, any of which would justify him immediate dismissal. His "face" must be secured, and his suspicious nature must be gratified. These occurrences take place in Chinese families, as well as in foreign families with Chinese servants, but not in the same degree, because a Chinese servant has learned how far he can impose upon the good nature of the foreigner, as he would never think of doing in the case of a Chinese master. It is for this reason that so many foreigners have in their employ Chinese servants whom they ought to have discharged long ago, and would have discharged if they had dared. They know that the mere proposal of such a thing will be the stirring up of a hornet's nest, the central figure of which will be the accused and "disgraced" servant, and they have not the courage to make a strike for liberty, lest in the case of failure their condition should be worse than before. There is a story of an Austrian city which was besieged by the Turks in the Middle Ages, and which was just on the point of capture. At a critical moment, an Austrian girl bethought herself of a

number of beehives, which she at once brought, and tumbled over the wall on the Turks now almost up to the parapet. The result was a speedy descent on the part of the Turks, and the saving of the city. The tactics of a Chinese often resemble that of the Austrian maiden and his success is frequently as signal, for this kind of a disturbance is such that as a Latin professor said of a storm, one would much rather "face it *per alium*," than "face it *per se*." No wonder that the adage runs "if you employ one, do not suspect him; if you suspect him, do not employ him." The Chinese way in such cases is simply to close one's eyes, and to pretend that one does not see, but for a foreigner this may not be so simple and easy to achieve.

We find it necessary to impress upon our children, when they come to be of an age to mingle in the world on their own account, that it is well not to be too confiding in strangers. This kind of caution does not need to be conveyed to the Chinese in their early years; for it is taken in with their mother's milk. It is a proverb that one man should not enter a temple, and that two men should not look together into a well. And why, we inquire, in surprise, should one man not enter a temple court alone? Because the priest may take advantage of the opportunity to make away with him! Two men should not gaze into a well, for if one of them is in debt to the other, or has in his possession something which the other wants, that other may seize the occasion to push his companion into the well!

Another class of exemples of mutual suspicion are those arising in the ordinary affairs of everyday life. There is a freedom and an absence of constraint in Western lands, which in China is conspicuously absent. To us it seems a matter of course that the simplest way to do a thing is for that reason the best. But in China there are different and quite other factors of which account must be taken. While this is true in regard to everything, it is most felt in regard to two matters which form the warp and woof of the lives of most Chinese—money and food. It is very difficult to convince a Chinese that a sum of money which may have been put into the hands of another to be divided between many persons, has been divided according to the theoretical plan, for he has no experience of any divisions of this sort, and he has had extended experience of divisions in which various deductions

in the shape of squeezes were the prominent features. In like manner it is very hard to make an arrangement by which one Chinese shall have charge of the food provision for others, in which, if close enquiry is made, it does not appear that those who receive the food suppose that the one who provides it is retaining a certain proportion for his own use. The dissatisfaction in such cases may possibly be wholly surpressed, but there is no reason to think that the suspicion is absent because it does not manifest itself upon the surface. Indeed it is only a foreigner who would raise the question at all, for the Chinese expect this state of things as surely as they reckon on friction in machinery, and with equal reason.

If any matter is to be accomplished which requires consultation and adjustment, it will not do in China, as it might in any Western land, to send a mere message to be delivered at the home of the person concerned, to the effect that such and such terms could be arranged. The principal must go himself, and he must see the principal on the other side. If the latter should not be at home, the visit must be repeated until he is found, for otherwise no one would be sure that the matter had not been distorted in its transmission through other media. Accustomed as the Chinese are to being entrusted with all varieties of errands for their friends, as mentioned in the chapter on the employment of intermediaries, there are some errands, especially those concerning foreigners, which they do not wish to undertake. A Chinese teacher in the writer's employ had been asked to find a servant whose services were no longer required, and mention to him that fact. He received the commission with a dejected air, and returned soon afterward to say that he feared that it had been given to him in a temporary forgetfulness of the Chinese nature. The inevitable enquiry of the person receiving the announcement would be, "*why does this man bring me this word?*" and no amount of explanation would ever have convinced the servant, his friends, his heirs, administrators or assigns, that that particular teacher was not in some way instrumental in upsetting the "rice bowl" of that servant.

Frequent references have been made to the social solidarity of the Chinese. In some kinds of cases, the whole family, or clan, all seem to have their fingers in the particular pie belonging to

some individual of the family. But into such affairs a person with a different surname is, if he be a wise person, careful not to intrude any of his fingers, lest they be burned. It is indeed a proverb that it is hard to give advice to one whose surname is different from one's own. What does this fellow mean by mixing himself up in my affairs? He *must* have an object, and it is taken for granted that the object is not a good one. If this is true of those who are life-long neighbours and friends, how much more is it true of those who are mere outsiders, and who have no special relations to the persons addressed. The character meaning "outside," as has already been elsewhere remarked, has in China a scope and a significance which can only be comprehended by degrees. The same kind of objection which is made to a foreigner, because he comes from an "outside" country, is made to a villager because he comes from an "outside" village. This is true with much greater emphasis if the outsider comes from no-one knows where, and wants no-one knows what. "Who knows what drug this fellow has in his gourd?" is the inevitable enquiry of the prudent Chinese, in regard to a fresh arrival. If a traveller happens to get astray and arrives at a village after dark, particularly if the hour is late, he will often find that no one will even come out of his house to give a simple direction. Under these circumstances the writer once wandered around for several hours, unable to get one of the many Chinese who were offered a reward for acting as a guide, even to listen to the proposal.

It is not every form of civilization which emphasizes the duty of entertaining strangers. And even in lands where the theory is recognized, there will be many who will sympathize with the sturdy yeoman of Yorkshire, who observes to his comrade, "I say, Bill, who is that chap yonder?" "Don't know him." "Well then 'eave 'arf a brick at him." Many of the proverbs of Solomon in regard to caution toward strangers, gain a new meaning after actual contact with Orientals, but the Chinese have carried their caution to a point which it would be hard to surpass. If a man has become insane and has strayed away from home, and his friends scour the country-side, hoping to hear something of him, they know very well that the chances of finding traces of him are slight. If he has been at a particular place, but has disappeared, the natural enquiry of his pursuers would be, what did you do with him? This might

lead to trouble, so the safest way, and the one sure to be adopted if the enquirer is a stranger, is to assume total ignorance of the whole affair. In the case supposed, the enquiry is by a stranger, but the same thing will not seldom happen, as we have learned by experience, when a Chinese stranger tries to find a man who is well-known. In a case of this sort, a stranger whose appearance indicated him to be a native of an adjacent province enquired his way to the village of a man of whom he was in quest. But on arriving there he was disappointed to find that the whole village was unanimous in the affirmation that no such man was known there, and that he had never even been heard of. This wholesale falsehood was not concocted by any deliberate prevision, for which there was no opportunity, but was simultaneously adopted by a whole village full of people, with the same unerring instinct which leads the prairie dog to dive into its hole when some unfamiliar object is sighted. In all instances of this kind, the slight variations of local dialect afford an infallible test of the general region from which one hails. It is hopeless for a man to claim to be a native of a district, the pronunciation of which differs by ever so little from his own, for his speech bewrayeth him. Not only will a stranger find it hard to get a clue to the whereabouts of a man, his possible business with whom excites instantaneous and general suspicion, but the same thing may be true, as we have also had repeated occasion to know, in regard to a whole village. Not long ago the writer sent several Chinese to look up certain other Chinese who had been for a long time in a foreign hospital under treatment. Very few of them could be found at all. In one case a man who ventured to hold conversation with the strangers, gave his surname only, which was that of a large clan, but positively refused to reveal his name, or "style." In another instance, a village of which the messengers were in search persistently retreated before them, like an *ignus fatuus*, and at last all traces of it disappeared, without its having been found at all! Yet once the strangers were probably within a mile or two of it, just as in the case just referred to the stranger who could not find the man for whom he was looking, proved to have been within ten rods of his dwelling at the time he was baffled.

A conspicuous illustration of the instinctive recognition by the Chinese of the existence of their own mutual suspicion is found in

the reluctance to be left alone in a room. If this should happen, a guest will not improbably exhibit a restless demeanour, and will perhaps stroll out into the passage, as much as to say, "do not suspect me; I did not take your things, as you see; I put them behind me." The same thing is sometimes observed when a self-respecting Chinese calls upon a foreigner.

Nothing is so certain to excite the most violent suspicion on the part of the Chinese, as the death of a person under circumstances which are in some respects peculiar. To this we may have occasion to refer in another connection. A typical example of this is the death of a married daughter. Although, as already mentioned, the parents are powerless to protect her while she lives, they are in some degree masters of the situation when she has died, if there is anything to which any suspicion can be made to attach itself. Her suicide is an occasion on which the girl's parents no longer adopt their proverbial position of holding down the head, but on the contrary hold their head erect, and virtually impose their own terms. The refusal to come to an understanding with the family of the girl under such circumstances would be punished by a long and vexatious lawsuit, the motive for which would be in the first instance revenge, but the main issue of which would eventually be the preservation of the "face" of the girl's family. There is an ancient saying in China, that when one is walking through an orchard where pears are grown, it is well not to adjust one's cap, and when passing through a melon patch, it is not the time to lace one's shoes. These sage aphorisms represent a generalized truth. In Chinese social life it is strictly necessary to walk softly, and one cannot be too careful. This is the reason, as we have seen in referring to the "dread of giving offence," why the Chinese are so constitutionally reticent at times which seem to us so ill-chosen. They know, as we cannot, that the smallest spark may kindle a fire that shall sweep a thousand acres. In contemplating these multiplied phenomena, to which very imperfect justice has after all been done, we have often been reminded of an anecdote told, we believe, of Dr. Nott, once President of Union College in the State of New York. The old gentleman had had a flower garden laid out in admirable style, with beds of all the proper shapes, and handsome terraces of brilliant blooms, all testifying not less to the taste of the owner than to the skill of the gardener. On the very evening

after its completion, however, a number of swine had effected their entrance to the garden, where for the whole night they had disported themselves to their own delight. In the morning, when the President came out to feast his eyes upon the work of his hands and brain, he was greeted with a spectacle of ruin of the most depressing description. Surveying the wreck of the flower beds and the brilliant parterres for some time in silence, he made at length this significant observation: "Well, you never can lay on dirt to suit a hog."

The commercial life of the Chinese illustrates their mutual suspicion, in a great variety of ways. To this, reference has been already made in speaking of "the employment of intermediaries." Neither buyer nor seller trusts the other, and each for that reason thinks that his interests are subserved by putting his affairs for the time being, out of his own hands, into those of a third person, who is strictly neutral, because his percentage will only be obtained by the completion of the bargain. No transaction is considered as made at all, until "bargain money" has been paid. If the matter is a more comprehensive one, something must be put into writing, for "talk is empty, while the mark of a pen is final." In the innumerable transactions of a mercantile people like the Chinese, there must, of course, be many exceptions to the theory, but in this case, as in others, *the exception* proves the rule. The chaotic condition of the silver market in China is due partly to the deep-seated suspicion which cash-shops entertain for their customers, which customers cherish toward the cash-shops, and in each case with the best grounds. Every chopped dollar in south China, every chopped piece of chopped silver in any part of China, is a witness to the suspicious nature of this great and commercial people; keen as they are to effect a trade, they are keener still in their reluctance to do so. Has the reader ever had occasion to replenish his supply of cash by trying to sell silver in a Chinese city after dark, when the shops have closed for the night? The very fact that a customer, whether Chinese or foreign makes no difference, wishes to sell silver at such an hour, is of itself suspicious, and it will not be surprising if every shop in the city should successively impart the sage advice to wait till to-morrow.

The banking system of China appears to be very comprehensive and intricate, and we know from Marco Polo that bank bills have been in use from a very ancient period. But they are not by any

means universal in their occurrence, and all of them appear to be exceedingly limited in the range of their circulation. The banks of two cities ten miles apart will not receive each other's bills, and for a very good reason. It has been already mentioned that regular markets are the places to which a purchaser is expected, and indeed required, to repair, if he wishes to buy anything, irrespective of the inconvenience which may thus be occasioned. Should any other course be pursued, both buyer and seller would be the prey to deep anxiety lest the price agreed upon should prove to have been a cash or two more or less than might otherwise have been the case. If any commodity is wanted out of its season, or when it is not usually an article of commerce, these embarrassments are at their maximum. Thus in a country district during the month of September, a friend had occasion to buy a few bundles of stalks of the sorghum or tall millet plant. Now at this particular season this kind of fuel is not ordinarily to be sold, because it has but just ripened, and being reckoned by weight which is unduly great when the sap is still green, no one wishes to buy. Thus there is at that time of year no market price. The total value of the material desired was but a fraction of a dollar; several Chinese held long and animated debates over the matter, and came at last to the unanimous conclusion that under the circumstances, there was and could be no price fixed, the only possible solution being for the foreigner who insisted upon having stalks at a time when all known precedents forbade the sale, to pay back at a later date the same bulk of stalks as that which he now irregularly borrowed!

The high rate of Chinese interest ranging from twenty-four to thirty-six or more per cent. is a proof of the lack of mutual confidence. The larger part of this extortionate exaction does not represent payment for the use of money, but insurance on risk, which is very great. The almost total lack of such forms of investments as we are so familiar with in Western lands, is due, not more to the lack of development of the resources of the Empire, than to the general mistrust of each other among the people. "The affairs of life hinge upon confidence," and it is for this reason that a large class of "affairs" in China will for a long time to come, be dissociated from their hinges, to the great detriment of the interests of the people.

A curious example of Chinese commercial suspicion was afforded a few months ago by a paragraph in the American newspapers, giving an account of the condition of things in the Chinese colony in the city of New York. The Chinese organization probably did not differ from that of other cities where the Chinese have established themselves. They have a Municipal Government of their own, and twelve leading Chinese are the officers thereof. They keep the money and the papers of the Municipality in a huge iron safe, and to insure absolute safety, the safe is locked with twelve ponderous brass (Chinese) padlocks all in a row, instead of the intricate and beautiful combination locks, used in the New York banks. Each one of the twelve members of the Chinese Board of Aldermen had a key to one of these padlocks, and when the safe is opened all twelve of them must be on hand, each to attend to the unlocking of his own padlock. One of these distinguished Aldermen having inopportunely died, the affairs of the Municipality were thrown into the utmost confusion. The key to his padlock could not be found, and if it had been found, it was said that no one would then venture to take the place of the deceased, through a superstitious fear that the dead man would be jealous of his successor, and would remove him by the same disease of which he himself had died. Even the funeral bills could not be paid until a special election had taken place to fill the vacancy. This little incident is indeed a window through which those who chose to do so may see some of the prominent traits of the Chinese character—clearly illustrated capacity for organisation, commercial ability, mutual suspicion, unlimited credulity, and tacit contempt for the institutions and inventions of the men of the West.

Mr. Spurgeon is credited with the observation that if anything is really to be done it should be accomplished by appointing a committee of two, and then putting one of them to bed. This plan may be adapted to the longitude of Greenwich, but not to China. In this country, the man who was put to bed would suspect when he got up, that the other man had taken advantage of his retirement to make off with the funds.

The structure of the Chinese Government contains many examples of the effects of lack of confidence. Eunuchs are an essentially Asiatic instance in point and they are supposed to have existed in China from very ancient times, but during the present

dynasty, this dangerous class of persons has been dealt with in a very practical way by the Manchus, and deprived of the power to do the same mischief as in past ages. Another example of the provision for that suspicion which must inevitably arise when such inharmonious elements as the conquerors and the conquered are to be co-ordinated in the government, is the singular combination of Manchus and Chinese in the administration of the government, as well as the arrangement by which the president of one of the Six Boards may be the vice-president of another. By these checks and balances, the equilibrium of the State machinery has been preserved. The censorate, as we need not pause to remark, furnishes another illustration of the same thing, on an extended and important scale. Those whose knowledge of the interior workings of the Chinese administration entitles their opinions to weight, assure us that the same mutual suspicion which we have seen to be characteristics of the social life of the Chinese, is equally characteristic of their official life. It could not indeed be otherwise. Chinese nature being what it is, high officials cannot but be jealous of those below them, for it is from that quarter that their rivals are to be dreaded. The lower officials, on the other hand, are not less suspicious of those above them, for it is from that quarter that their removal may be at any moment effected. There seems the best reason to believe that both the higher and the lower officials alike are more or less jealous of the large and powerful literary class, and the officials are uniformly suspicious of the people. This last state of mind is well warranted by what is known of the multitudinous semi-political sects, with which the whole Empire is honeycombed. A district magistrate will pounce down upon the annual gathering of a temperance society such as the well known Tsai-li, which merely forbids opium, wine and tobacco, and turn over their anticipated feast to the voracious "wolves and tigers" of his yamên, not because it is proved that the designs of the Tsai-li Society are treasonable, but because it has been officially assumed long since that they must be so. All secret societies are treasonable, and this among the rest. This generalized suspicion settles the whole question, and whenever occasion arises, the government interposes, seizes the leaders, banishes or exterminates them, and thus for the moment allays its suspicions.

It is obvious that so powerful a principle as the one which we are considering must be a strong reinforcement of that innate conservatism which has been already discussed, to prevent the adoption of what is new. The census which is occasionally called for by the government, does not occur with sufficient frequency to make it familiar to the Chinese, even in name. It always excites an immediate suspicion that some ulterior end is in view. How real this suspicion is, is illustrated by an incident which occurred within two years in a village next to the one in which the writer lived. One of two brothers hearing that a new census had been ordered, took it for granted that it signified compulsory emigration. It is customary in such cases to leave one brother at home to look after the graves of the ancestors, but the younger of the two, foreseeing that he must go, promptly proceed to save himself from the fatigues of a long journey, by committing suicide, thus checkmating the government.

It is a mixture of suspicion and of conservatism which has made the path of the young Chinese, who were educated in the United States, such a bed of thorns from the time of their return to the present day; it is the same fell combination, which shows itself in opposition to the inevitable introduction of railways into China; it is the same spirit which has ruled the proceedings instituted by the governor of the Two Kuang provinces, in the matter of his mint. It is reported that the first machinery for this great innovation was such that the cash would have been punched with a round hole, instead of a square one. This was of itself an auspice and guarantee of failure, for is not the "round and the square" a classical expression for completeness? By what means could even the powerful governor-general of the Two Kuang explain to his people the disappearance of the familiar old square hole? It would not indeed be necessary, for it is certain that whatever his wishes might have been, the people would have had none of it. At great expense new punches were obtained, the "round and the square" were brought into their normal relations, and reform of the currency went on.

The same or even greater obstacles are thrown in the way of the opening of mines, which if properly worked, might make China what she ought to be, a rich country. The "earth dragon" below ground, and peculation and suspicion above it, are as yet too much

for anything more than the most rudimentary steps of progress in this most essential direction. No matter how great advantages may be or how obvious, it is almost impossible to get new things introduced, when an all-pervading suspicion frowns upon them. Dr. Nevius, who has done so much at Chefoo for the cultivation of a high grade of foreign fruits in China, fruits which visibly yield an enormous profit, has been obliged to contend against this suspicion at every step, and one less patient and less philanthropic would long since have abandoned the project in disgust. When profits are once assured, this state of things of course gradually disappears. But it is very real when enquiries are set on foot, like those by the Imperial Maritime Customs in regard to the raising of silk-worms, or tea. How can those who are interested in these matters possibly believe, in defiance of all the accumulated experience of past ages, that the object of these inquiries is not a tax, but the promotion of production, and the increase of the profits of skilled labour? Who ever heard of such a thing, and who can believe it when he does hear it? The attitude of the Chinese mind towards such projects as this may be best expressed in the old Dutch proverb, "Good morrow to you all, as the fox said when he leaped into the goose-pen!"

It remains to speak of the special relations of this topic to foreigners, and these relations are many and varied. The subject is intimately associated with that of credulity, already briefly and inadequately treated. The profound suspicion with which foreigners are regarded is often accompanied by and perhaps largely due to belief deep-rooted and ineradicable, that foreigners are able to do the most impossible things with the greatest ease. If a foreigner walks out in a place where he has not been often seen, it is inferred that he is inspecting the *fêng-shui* of the district. If he surveys a river, he is determining the existence of precious metals. He is supposed to be able to see some distance into the earth, and to have his eyes on whatever is best worth taking away. If he engages in famine relief, it is not thought too much to suppose that the ultimate object must be to carry off a large part of the population of the district, to be disposed of in foreign lands. It is by reason of these opinions on *fêng-shui*, that the presence of foreigners on the walls of Chinese cities, has so often led to disturbances, and that the height of foreign buildings in China must be as carefully

regulated as the location of a frontier of the Empire. The belief in the uniformity of nature, as we have already mentioned elsewhere, appears to be totally lacking in China. Mr. Baber mentions a saying in Szechuan, of a certain hill, that opium grows without, and coal within. But this is not simply a notion of the ignorant, for Professor Pumpelly declares that one of the high officials in Peking told him the same thing, and used the statement as an argument against the too rapid removal of coal deposits; the rate of the growth of which is unknown. It is related of the late statesman Wen Hsiang, that having read Dr. Martin's *Evidences of Christianity*, on being asked what he thought of it, he replied that the scientific part of the work he was prepared to accept, but *the religious sections* in which the affirmation is made that the earth revolves around the sun, were more than he could believe!

The whole subject of the entrance of foreigners into China is beyond the Chinese intellect, in its present state of development. Seeing Baron von Richthofen ride over the country in what appeared to the people of Szechuan a vague and purposeless manner, they imagined him to be a fugitive from some disastrous battle. Many a Chinese who has afterwards come to understand the foreign barbarian all too well, has at first sight of his form, especially if he chanced to be tall, been seized with secret terror. Many Chinese women are persuaded that if they once voluntarily enter a foreigner's dwelling, the fatal spell will work, and they will be bewitched; if they are at last prevailed upon to enter, they will not on any account step on the thresh-hold, nor look into a mirror when it may be offered to their sight, for thus they would betray away their safety. A few months ago a young Chinese scholar from an interior province, where foreigners are practically unknown, was engaged with some difficulty to come to the premises of the writer, to assist a new comer in acquiring the language. He remained a few weeks, when he recollected that his mother was very much in need of his filial care, and left, promising to return at a fixed date, but was seen no more. During all the time that he was on the foreigner's premises, this astute Confucianist never once took a sip of tea, which was brought to him regularly by the servants, nor ate a meal on the place, lest he should imbibe besotment. When a foreign envelope was handed to him by another teacher, that he might

enclose the letter which he had written to his mother assuring her that thus far he was safe, and when it was shown him how this same envolope was self-sealing, a little moisture being applied by the tongue, his presence of mind did not for an instant forsake him, and he blandly requested the *other teacher* to do the sealing, as he was not expert at it. It is this frame of mind which leads to the persistent notions in regard to Chinese books printed by foreigners. There is a widespread conviction that they are drugged, and the smell of printer's ink is frequently identified as that of the "bewildering drug" which is embodied in their composition. Sometimes one hears that it is only necessary to read one of these books, and forthwith he is a slave to foreigners. A slightly different point of view was that taken by a lad whom we have lately heard, who having read a little way in one of these tracts threw it down in terror and ran home, telling his friends that if one should read that book, *and tell a lie*, he would inevitably go to hell! Sometimes colporteurs have found it impossible to give away these books, not as might be supposed because of any hostility to the contents, of which nothing was known, and for which nothing was cared, but because it was feared that the gift would be made the basis from which to levy a kind of black-mail, in a manner with which the Chinese are only too familiar. The same pre-supposition leads to a panic if a foreigner injudiciously attempts to take down the names of Chinese children, a simple process which has been known to be eminently successful in breaking up a prospective school. The system of romanising Chinese characters must in its intial stages meet this objection and suspicion. Why should a foreigner wish to teach his pupils to write in such a way that their friends at home cannot read what they say? All the explanations in the world will not suffice to make this clear to a suspicious old Chinese who knows that what has been good enough for the generations that have come before his children, is good enough for them, and much better than the invention of some foreigner of unknown antecedents. It may almost be said that a general objection is entertained to *anything* which a foreigner proposes, and often for the apparent reason that he proposes it. The trait of "flexible inflexibility" leads your Chinese friend to assure you in the blandest but most unmistakable terms, that your proposal is very admirable and very preposterous.

Sarcasm is a weapon which in the hands of a foreigner is not at all to the taste of the Chinese. A foreigner whose knowledge of Chinese was by no means equal to the demands which he wished to make upon it, in a fit of deep disgust at some sin of omission or commission on the part of one of his servants called him in English, a "humbug." "Deep rankled in his side the fatal dart," and at the earliest opportunity the servant begged of a lady whose Chinese was fully equal to the tax upon it, to be told what the dreadful word meant which had been thus applied to him. The mandarins who seized upon the blocks of Mr. Thom's translation of Æsop's Fables, were in the same frame of mind as the Peking servant. These officials could not help perceiving in the talking geese, tigers, foxes, and lions, some recondite meaning, which could be best nipped in the bud by suppressing the entire edition.

Some of the most persistent instances of Chinese suspicion toward foreigners are manifested in connection with the many hospitals and dispensaries now scattered over so large a part of China. Amid the vast number of patients, there are many who exhibit an implicit faith and a touching confidence in the good-will and the skill of the foreign physician. But there are many others, of whose feelings we know much less, except as the result of careful enquiry, who continue to believe the most irrational rumours in regard to the extraction of eyes and hearts for medicine, the irresistible propensity of the surgeon to reduce his patients to mincemeat, and the fearful disposition said to be made of Chinese children in the depths of foreign cellars. A year or two of experience of the wide-spread benefits of such an institution might be expected to dissipate such idle rumours, as the wind disperses a mist; but they continue to flourish side by side with tens of thousand of successful treatments, as mould thrives in warm damp spots during the month of August. The whole history of foreign intercourse with China is a history of suspicion and prevarication on the part of the Chinese, while it doubtless has not been free from grave faults on the side of foreigners. It is a weary history to retrace, and its lessons may be relegated to those who are charged with the often thankless task of conducting such negotiations. But as it often happens that private persons are obliged to be their own diplomats in China, it is well to know how it should be done. As an illustration we will give a sample case, of which we happen to

have heard, which is an excellent illustration. The question was about the renting of some premises in an interior city, to which a local official on various grounds took exception. The foreigner presented himself at the interview which had been arranged, clad in the Chinese dress, and armed with the necessary materials for writing. After the preliminary conversation, the foreigner slowly opened his writing materials, adjusted his paper, shook out his pen, examined his ink, with an air of intense pre-occupation. The Chinese official was watching this performance with the keenest interest and the liveliest curiosity. "What are you doing?" he enquired. The foreigner explained that he was simply getting his writing materials in order—"only that and nothing more." "Writing materials—what for?" "To take down your answers," was the reply. The official hastened to assure his foreign guest that this extremity would by no means be called for, as *the premises could be secured!* How could this magistrate be sure where he should next hear of this mysterious document, the contents of which he could not possibly know?

China is a country which abounds in wild rumours, often of a character to fill the heart with dread. Within the past few months such a state of things has been reported among the Chinese in Singapore, that jinricsha coolies positively refused to travel a certain street after dark, on account of the imminent danger of having their heads suddenly and mysteriously cut off. The Empire is probably never free from such epochs of horror; to those concerned the terrors are as real as those of the French Revolution to the Parisians of 1789. Infinite credulity and mutual suspicion are the elements of the soil in which these fearful rumours thrive, and on which they fatten. When they have to do with foreigners, long and painful experience has shown that they must not be despised, but must be taken in the early stages of their development. None of them could do serious harm if the local officials were only sincerely interested to stamp them out. In their ultimate outcome, when they have been suffered to grow unchecked, these rumours result in such atrocities as the Tientsin massacre. All parts of China are well adapted to their rapid development, and there is scarcely a province where they have not in some form occurred. For the complete removal of these outbreaks the time element is as necessary as for the results of geologic epochs. The

best way to prevent their occurrence is to convince the Chinese by irrefragable object lessons, that foreigners are the sincere well-wishers of the Chinese. This simple proposition once firmly established, then for the first time will it be true that "within the four seas, all are brethen."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE ABSENCE OF SINCERITY.

THUS far in the consideration of the characteristics of the Chinese, we may be supposed to have been upon territory where there is a somewhat general consensus of opinion. We have now reached a region where our conclusions may be disputed. We, therefore, take pleasure in warning the patient reader to be on his guard, and not to be misled by a view possibly inadequate and one-sided but rather to prove all things by the only available test, that of observation and experience.

The Chinese ideograph, which is commonly translated sincerity, is composed of the radicals denoting man and words. Its meaning lies upon the surface. It is the last in the series of five constant virtues enumerated by the Chinese, and in the opinion of many who are well acquainted with them, it is in fact about the last virtue which in the Celestial Empire is likely to be met with on any considerable scale. Many who know the Chinese will agree with the observation of Professor Kidd, who, after speaking of the Chinese doctrine of "Sincerity," continues, "But if this virtue had been chosen as a national characteristic, not only to be set at defiance in practice, but to form the most striking contrast to existing manners, a more appropriate one than sincerity could not have been found. So opposed is the public and private character of the Chinese to genuine sincerity, that an enemy might have selected it as ironically descriptive of their conduct in contrast with their pretensions. Falsehood, duplicity, insincerity, and obsequious accommodation to favourable circumstances, are national features remarkable prominent." How far this judgment is justified by the facts of Chinese life, we may be able better to decide when we shall have considered those facts in detail. The ideograph which denotes an oath, it may be remarked in

passing, is composed of the radical for words, and a character which means to break, but upon this circumstance we do not lay any stress.

We have already assumed that it is reasonable theory, and one which we believe is supposed by the opinion of competent scholars, that the Chinese of the present day do not differ to any great extent from the Chinese of antiquity. There can hardly be a doubt that the standard of the Chinese, and the present standard of Western nations, as to what ought to be called sincerity, differ widely. To an Occidental there is a significance in the incident related of Confucius and Ju-pei, as found in the Confucian Analects, which is not at all apprehensible to a Confucianist. The following is the passage, from Legge's translation:—"Ju-pei wished to see Confucius, but Confucius declined to see him on the ground of being sick. When the bearer of this message went out at the door, Confucius took his harpsichord, and sung to it, in order that Ja-pei might hear." The object of Confucius was to avoid the disagreeable task of saying that the character of Ju-pei was not such that Confucius wished to meet him, and he took this characteristically Chinese way to do it.

To feign sickness in order to convey an idea by indirection is a classical proceeding by no means confined to this instance in the life of Confucius. Mencius did the same, on different occasions. The record of one of them is particularly instructive. Mencius was a guest in the kingdom of Ch'i. Being an honoured philosopher, it was for him either to pay his respects at the Court, or not, as he preferred. If the king wished to ask his advice, it was for the king to make the first call, thus showing his respect for the virtue of the Sage. Thereupon began a little game between the king and Mencius to see which should outwit the other. The king made the first move, by despatching a messenger to say that the king was about to call on Mencius, but had a cold, and dared not expose himself to the wind, and should be glad to see Mencius at his reception next morning. Mencius promptly responded by a countermove, saying that he was unfortunately himself unwell, and therefore unable to go to Court. To show that his alleged sickness was a mere excuse, Mencius went the next day to pay a visit of condolence to a third party, intending that the king should hear of it, and should understand that Mencius was

aware of the disrespect which the king had showed by endeavouring to inveigle Mencius to Court. When remonstrated with on the apparent impropriety of this preceeding, Mencius gravely replied, "*Yesterday I was unwell*, to-day I am better, why should I not pay this visit?" Meantime, the king sent a messenger to enquire after the health of Mencius, and also a physician. The son (or nephew) of Mencius was fully equal to the occasion, and sent word to the king, that *although Mencius had been ill the day before, he was now so much better that he had already gone to Court*, although it was not certain whether he had reached there by that time. Having sent this message, the nephew of Mencius at once sent men in all directions to meet Mencius, urging him to go at once to Court, in order to make good the words of the nephew. Mencius, however, would do nothing of the kind, but went to the house of an officer of the king, and there spent the night, with the express intention that the king should understand clearly that the sickness was merely a feigned one. This plan would have been frustrated by the lie of the nephew, if Mencius had followed his advice and gone from his visit of condolence to the Court. The officer with whom Mencius spent the night held a long conversation with the Sage as to the merits of this proceeding, but the discussion between them turns exclusively on the question of propriety, and precedent, and no reference whatever to the morality of lying for the sake of convenience. There is no apparent reason to suppose that this point was ever thought of by any of the persons concerned, any more than it is by a modern Confucian teacher who explains the passage to his pupils.

There is no doubt that the ancient Chinese were far in advance of their contemporaries in many other lands, in the instinct of preserving records of the past. Their histories, however prolix, are undoubtedly comprehensive. Many Western writers seem to feel the greatest admiration for Chinese histories, and place unrestricted confidence in their statements. The following paragraph is taken from an essay by Dr. J. Singer, lector of the University of Vienna, translated and published in the *China Review*, July 1888:—"Scientific criticism has long ago recognized and in ever increasing extent proved the historical reliability of the ancient documents of China. Richthofen, for instance, the latest and most thorough-going explorer of China, in discussing the

surprisingly contradictory elements which make up the character of the Chinese as a people, contrasts their strict truthfulness in recording historical events and their earnestness in the search for correct knowledge, whenever statistical facts are concerned, with that absolute and generally sanctioned license in lying and dissimulation which prevails everywhere in China, in popular intercourse and in diplomatic negotiations." It should be borne distinctly in mind, that historical accuracy may be exhibited in two widely different lines, the narration of events in due order and proportion, and the explanation of those events by an analysis of character and motives. It is said by those who have looked into Chinese histories most extensively, that while in the former particular these works are no doubt far in advance of the times in which they were written, in the latter particular they are by no means adapted to carry the impression of that scrupulosity which Dr. Singer supposes. Without expressing any opinion on a subject of which we have no knowledge, we will merely call attention to the singular, if not unprecedented, circumstance that a nation which is affirmed to indulge in a license for lying, can at the same time furnish successive generations of historiographers who are reverent of the truth. Do not the same passions which have distorted the history of other lands operate in China? Do not the same causes produce in China the same effects as in the rest of the world?

We have just seen that those who claim truthfulness for the Chinese in their histories, are ready enough to admit that in China truth is confined to histories. It is of course impossible to prove that every Chinese will lie, and we have no wish to do so if it were possible. The strongest testimony on this point can be gathered from the Chinese themselves, whenever their consciences have been sufficiently awakened, and their attention directed to the matter. Such persons are frequently heard to say of their race, as the South Sea Island chief said of his, "As soon as we open our mouths, a lie is born." To us, however, it does not seem that the Chinese lie for the sake of lying, as some have supposed, but mainly for the sake of certain advantages not otherwise to be had. "Incapable of speaking the truth," says Mr. Baber, "they are equally incapable of believing it." A friend of the writer received a visit from a Chinese lad who had learned

English, and who wished to add to his vocabulary an expression meaning "you lie." He was told the phrase, but cautioned not to use it to a foreigner, as the result would certainly be that he would be knocked down. He expressed unfeigned surprise at this strange announcement, for to his mind the words conveyed a meaning as harmless as the remark, "you are humbugging me." Mr. Cooke, the China correspondent of the London *Times* in 1857, speaking of the antipathy of Occidentals to be called liars, observes, "but if you say the same thing to a Chinaman, you arouse in him no sense of outrage, no sentiment of degradation. He does not deny the fact. His answer is, 'I should not *dare* to lie to your Excellency.' To say to a Chinaman, 'you are an habitual liar, and you are meditating a lie at this moment,' is like saying to an Englishman, 'you are a confirmed punster, and I am satisfied you have some horrible pun in your head at this moment.'"

The ordinary speech of the Chinese is so full of insincerity, which yet does not rise to the dignity of falsehood, that it is very difficult to learn the truth in almost any case. In China it is literally true that a fact is the hardest thing in the world to get. *One never feels sure that he has been told the whole of anything.* Even where a person is seeking your help, as for example in a law-suit, and wishes to put his case entirely in your hands, nothing is more probable than that you will discover subsequently that several important particulars have been suppressed, apparently from the general instinct of prevarication and not of malice prepense, since the person himself must be the only loser by the suppression. The whole of anything does not come out till afterward, no matter at what point you take it up. A person who is well acquainted with the Chinese, will not feel that he understands a matter because he has heard all about it, but will rather take the items which he has heard, and combine them with others, and finally call a council of the Chinese whom he trusts most, and hold a kind of inquest over these alleged facts to ascertain what their real bearing probably is.

Lack of sincerity, combined with the suspicion which has been already discussed, accounts for the facts that a Chinese will often talk for a very great length of time, saying practically nothing whatever. Much of the incomprehensibility of the Chinese, so far as foreigners are concerned, is due to the insincerity of the Chinese.

We cannot be sure what they are after. *We always feel that there is more behind.* It is for this reason that when a Chinese comes to you and whispers to you mysteriously something about another Chinese in whom you are much interested, you are not unlikely to experience a sinking sensation in the pit of the stomach. You are uncertain whether the one who is speaking is telling the truth, or whether the character of the one of whom he is speaking has caved in. *One never has any assurance that a Chinese ultimatum is ultimate.* This proposition, so easily stated, contains in itself the germ of multitudinous anxieties for the trader, the traveller, and the diplomatist. *The real reason for anything is hardly ever to be expected*, and even when it has been given, one cannot be sure of this fact. Every Chinese, the uneducated not less than others, is by nature a kind of cuttle fish, capable of distilling any amount of turbid ink, into which he can retreat with the utmost safety so far as pursuit is concerned. If you are interviewed on a journey, and invited to contribute to the travelling expenses of some impecunious individual who hopes to exploit a new field, your attendant does not say as you would do, "your expenses are none of my affair, begone with you," but "with a smile that is child-like and bland," he explains that your allowance of money is barely sufficient for your own use—is rather short indeed, and so you will be deprived of the pleasure of contributing to your fellow traveller. We have seldom met a Chinese gatekeeper who would say to a Chinese crowd, as a foreigner tells him to do, "you *cannot* come in here," but he will observe instead, that they must not come in, *because the big dog will bite them* if they do.

There are few Chinese who have any well developed conscience on the subject of keeping an engagement. This characteristic is connected with their talent for misunderstanding, and with their disregard of time. But whatever the real reason for the failure, it is interesting to see what a variety of alleged reasons exist for it; the Chinese in general resemble the man who being accused of having broken his promise, replied that it was of no consequence, as he could make another just as good. If it is a fault for which he is reproved, promises of amendment flow in limpid streams from his lips. His acknowledgments of wrong are complete, in fact too complete, and leave nothing to be desired,

but sincerity. A Chinese teacher who was employed in inditing and commenting upon Chinese aphorisms, after writing down a fine sentiment of the ancients, made an annotation to the effect that one should never refuse a request in an abrupt manner, but should on the contrary grant it in form, although with no intention to do so in substance. Put him off till to-morrow, and then until another to-morrow. "Thus," he remarked in his note, "you comfort his heart!" Have any of our readers ever been the recipients of this species of "comfort," given on the Chinese plan, and if so have they "refused to be comforted" on the Occidental plan? So far as we know, the principle here avowed is the one which is generally acted upon by the Chinese who have debts, for which payment is sought. No one expects to collect his debt at the time that he applies for it, and he is not disappointed; but he is told most positively that he will get it the next time, and the next and the next.

The Chinese have a strong desire to say what you want said if they can find out what that is. "Was this water boiled?" asked the mistress of a servant, "it was not thoroughly boiled" was the reply. "Did you not take this water directly out of the water-jar?" was the rejoinder. "Yes" was the unwilling admission. It is a Chinese tenet that one should not push things to extremities, so as to get "too severe realities." They have long ago made the discovery so difficult for the Anglo-Saxon to act upon, that "an ounce of taffy is worth a pound of epitaphy," so that their monuments to the dead, unlike those in Western lands, are distinguished for their sobriety and the accuracy of their statements. There is a story of the dramatist Sheridan, who came into a church and having attempted to enter a pew, found the pew door locked. Returning, he was asked why he had not gone in, and replied, "*pudor vetat.*" The same obstacle to which Sheridan humorously referred, sometimes prevent the Chinese from telling the truth, as in the case of a wealthy Cantonese, at the time of the war of 1842, who was asked by a British officer why, since China claimed to be so advanced, she had no railroads. He instantly replied, "Canton side no have got—*Peking side have got.*" This was almost fifty years ago, and "Peking side" is still somewhat deficient in this line. Is it that "shame forbids," as it forbids the telling of the truth?

One of the ways in which the native insincerity of the Chinese is most characteristically manifested, is their demeanour towards children, who are taught to be insincere, without consciousness of the fact either on their own part, or on the part of those who teach them. Before he is old enough to talk, and when he can attach only the vaguest significance to the words which he hears, a child is told that unless he does as he is bid, some terrific object, said to be concealed in the sleeve of a grown person, will catch him. It is not uncommon for foreigners to be put in the place of the unknown monster, and this fact alone would be sufficent to account for all the bad words which we frequently hear applied to ourselves. Why should not children who may have been affrighted with our vague terrors when they were young, hoot us in the streets, as soon as they have grown large enough to perceive that we are not dangerous, but only ridiculous? The carter who is annoyed by the urchins in the street who yell after his foreign passenger, shouts to them that he shall capture several of them, tie them on behind his cart, and carry them off. The boatman, under like provocation, contents himself with the observation that he shall pour scalding water upon them. The expressions, "I'll beat you; I'll kill you," are understood by a Chinese child of some experience, to constitute an ellipsis for "Stop that!" We have heard of a little foreign miss of tender years, whose association with a Chinese nurse had wrought its natural effect, so that when the child was removed from her cradle at a time which did not commend itself to her feelings, she compendiously observed in Chinese, "with injurious pleonasm" "I'll gore you, I'll kick you, I'll rail at you, I'll beat you, I'll kill you!"

It was in view of the results of such an education as this that M. Huc, whose language is not perhaps too strong for the facts, comments upon the characteristics of Chinese children, in words which may recall the exclamation of De Quincey, "What must it be to be a Chinese child!" "The Chinese have in general so much precocity of judgment and intelligence, that they are capable of attending to serious business at an age when European children think only of play; and though somewhat inclined to moroseness and melancholy, the juvenile inhabitants of the Celestial Empire are early accustomed to the realities of life. The children of the great towns soon learn to understand commercial affairs,

industrial speculations, and moreover all the knaveries of stock-jobbing; and the children of the country know perfectly well how much a field of rice will produce, and can calculate as well as any grown man the profits derivable from the culture of the mulberry, or the tea-plant. These little materialists appear to have somewhat withered hearts, and are by no means remarkable for candour or simplicity; they have seldom any aspirations toward generous ideas or noble sentiments, and one may see in the very look of their narrow oblique eyes, the indications of roguery, cupidity and cunning." It should be added, that what M. Huc says of the precocious development of Chinese children, is by no means so applicable to those from the country, taken as a class, as to those born in the city. Many of the former grow up without ever having come in contact with an idea worth mentioning and in their later development they produce those perfect specimens of "intellectual turbidity" of which we have already spoken.

Of the politeness of the Chinese, we have already, albeit very inadequately spoken. It is a topic intimately related to the one under consideration. We must dissociate Chinese politeness from those ideas of sincerity and cordiality which to us constitute the charm of social intercourse, for however sincere and cordial the Chinese may sometimes be, these are not inherent qualities to their politeness. It is rather ceremony, the correct performance of which is necessary to put one right with those about him. It is, as already remarked, analogous to a game of chees, in which the person who does not know the right move, or who for any reason does not make it, renders himself ridiculous. Every man is supposed to be playing his part in public, a supposition which in China corresponds to the fact. It is for this reason that studious "politeness" in China is so often co-existent with partly concealed or altogether undisguised contempt. A strange scholar who happens to be thrown into the society of other scholars, will be promptly exposed to the ordeal by what we have termed the chess-game battle. If at any part of the proceedings he betrays signs of not knowing the next move, his inquisitors will not hesitate to bring in the verdict, that he is an ignorant pretender. "*I* said so and so to him, and instead of the proper reply, *he* said so and so." This is like a failure to give the pass word of a secret society, or the countersign on picket, and will naturally suggest that the

person in question should be arrested as a suspicious character, endeavoring to pass under false pretences!

There is in Chinese a whole vocabulary of words which are indispensable to one who wishes to pose as a "polite" person, words in which whatever belongs to the speaker is treated with scorn and contempt, and whatever relates to the person addressed is honourable. The "polite" Chinese will refer to his wife, if driven to the extremity of referring to her at all, as his "dull thorn," or in some similar elegant figure of speech, while the rustic, who grasps at the substance of "politeness" although ignorant of its formal expression, perhaps alludes to the companion of his joys and sorrows, as his "stinking woman?" This trait of Chinese etiquette is not inaptly presented in one of their own tales, in which a visitor is represented as calling in his best robes, and seated in the reception room awaiting the arrival of his host. A rat which had been disporting itself upon the beams above, insinuating its nose into a jar of oil which was put there for safe keeping, frightened at the sudden instrusion of the caller, ran away, and in so doing upset the oil jar, which fell directly on the caller, striking him a severe blow, and ruining his elegant garments with the saturation of the oil. Just as the face of the guest was purple with rage at this disaster, the host entered, when the proper salutations were performed, after which the guest proceeded to explain the situation. "As I entered your honourable apartment, and seated myself under your honourable beam, I inadvertently terrified your honourable rat, which fled and upset your honourable oil jar upon my mean and insignificant clothing, which is the reason of my contemptible appearance in your honourable presence."

That very few foreigners can ever bring themselves to give Chinese invitations in a Chinese way, goes without saying. It requires long practice to bow cordially to a Chinese crowd as one goes to a meal, and remark blandly, "Please all sit down and eat," or to sweep a cup of tea in a semi-circle just as it is raised to the lips, and addressing oneself to the multitude, observe with gravity, "Please all drink." Not less real is the moral difficulty of exclaiming at suitable situations, "*K'o-t'ou, k'o-t'ou*," signifying, "I can, may, must, might, could, would, or should (as the case may be) give you a *k'o-t'ou*;" or of occasionally interjecting the observation, "I ought to be beaten, I ought to be killed," meaning that I have

offended against some detail of the rules of etiquette; or of stopping in the midst of a horse-back ride, upon meeting a casual acquaintance and proposing to him, "*I* will get off and *you* shall ride," quite irrespective of the directions in which you may be travelling, or the general irrationality of the procedure. Yet the most ignorant and uncultivated Chinese will frequently give these invitations, with an air which extorts admiration from the most unsympathetic Occidental, who pays the unconscious tribute of him who cannot, to him who can. Such little ceremonies, as we have had repeated occasion to observe, are enforced contributions on the part of individuals to society at large, that friction may be diminished, and he who refuses to contribute will be punished in a manner not the less real, because it is oblique. Thus a carter who neglects to take his *queue* down from his head and descend from his cart, when he has occasion to enquire the way, will not improbably be given a wrong direction, and reviled besides.

To be so able to determine what is the proper thing to be done when Orientals offer presents, is in itself a science, and perhaps as much so in China as in other countries. Some things must not be accepted at all, while others must not be altogether refused, and there is generally a broad debatable land, in regard to which a foreigner can be sure of nothing except that, left to his own judgment, he will almost infallibly do the wrong thing. In general, offers of presents are to be suspected, especially those which are in any particular extraordinary. Of this class are those which are tendered on the occasion of the birth of a son, in reference to which the classical dictum "I fear the Greeks, *even* bearing gifts," is universally and perennially appropriate. There is always something behind such an offer, and, as the homely Chinese says of a rat dragging a shovel, the "larger end is the one that is behind," or in other words, what is (virtually) required in return is much greater than what is given. Of the hollowness of these offers many of our readers have no doubt had experience. We have ourselves had occasion to be but too familiar with the details of a case, in which a theatrical exhibition was offered to a few foreigners by a Chinese village, as a mark of respect, of course with the implied understanding that it should be duly acknowledged by suitable feasts. When this honour was definitely declined, it was proposed to devote the funds, or rather a small part of them, to

the construction of a building for public use, which in the case of the first village was actually done. No sooner was this agreed upon, than eleven other villages, also deeply smitten with gratitude for famine relief and medical help, proceeded to send deputations to make on their part formal offers of theatrical exhibitions, which they were prefectly aware would be and must be declined. The representatives of each village received the intelligence of the refusal of these honours with the same sad surprise, each of them offered to divert the funds in question to the public building already referred to, and each one of them allowed the matter to drop at that point, and no further reference whatever was ever made to it by any one of them!

It is not foreigners only who are beset in this way. Rich Chinese, who have had the misfortune to be made happy, are sometimes visited by their neighbours with congratulatory gifts of a trifling character, such as toys for a new born heir, presents, the total value of which is practically nothing, but which must be acknowledged by a feast—the invariable and always appropriate Chinese response. It is on occasions like this, that the most inexpert in Chinese affairs learns to appreciate the accuracy of the Chinese aphorism, which observes, "when one is eating one's own, he eats till the tears come, but when he is eating the food of others, he eats till the perspiration flows." It frequently happens under such conditions, that the host is obliged to assume the most cordial appearance of welcome, when he is inwardly fuming with rage which cannot possibly be expressed without the loss of his "face," which would be even more deadly than the loss of the food.

This suggests that large class of expressions, which come under the general designation of "face-talk." That much of the external decorum with which foreigners are treated by Chinese in their employ, especially in large cities, is a mere external veneer, is easily seen by contrasting the behaviour of the same persons in public and in private. It is said that a Chinese teacher who is a model of the proprieties at his foreign master's house, is not unlikely to "cut him dead" if he meets the same master on the streets of Peking, for the reason that to notice him at that time would lead to a public recognition of the fact that the Chinese pundit is in some way indebted to the foreign barbarian for replenishing the Chinaman's rice-bowl, a circumstance which

however notorious, must not be formally admitted, especially in public. It is very common for a number of Chinese on entering a room where there is a foreigner, to salute all the Chinese in the room by turn, and totally ignore the foreigner. A Chinese teacher is not unlikely to flatter his foreign pupil with the information that his ear is remarkably correct and his pronunciation almost perfect, and that he will soon surpass all his contemporaries in the acquisition of the language, while at the very same time, the peculiar errors of the pupil are not improbably matter of sport between the teacher and his companions. In general it may be taken for granted that the last person to set one right in matters of Chinese speech, is the teacher who is employed for that purpose.

One of the ways in which the formal and hollow politeness of the Chinese manifests itself, is in voluntary offers to do what it is very desirable should be done, but which others cannot or will not undertake. If the offer comes to nothing we should not be disappointed, for it is not improbable that it was made with the definite knowledge that it could not be carried out, but the "face" of the friend who made the offer is assured. In like manner if there is a dispute as to the amount of money to be paid at an inn, your carter will probably come forward as arbitrator, and decide that he will make up the difference himself, which he does by taking the amount required from your cash bag. Or if he were to pay the money from his own funds, he would bring in his bill for the same, and if he was reminded that he offered of his own accord to make it up, he would reply, "Do you expect the man who attends the funeral to be buried in the coffin too?"

There is a great deal of real modesty in China, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, but it cannot for a moment be doubted that there is likewise a great deal of mock modesty, both on the part of men and of women. It is very common to hear it said of some disagreeable matter, that it is wholly unmentionable, that the words are totally unutterable, etc., etc., when all parties are perfectly aware that this is a mere form denoting reluctance to express an opinion. The very persons who use this high-toned language would be ready enough to employ the foulest expressions of vituperation, whenever they were excited by anger. False modesty is matched by a false sympathy, which consists of empty words, but for this the Chinese are not

to be blamed, as they have no adequate material out of which sympathy for others can be developed in any considerable quantities, and for any length of time. But empty sympathy is not so repugnant to good taste, as that mockery of sympathy and of all true feeling which contemplates death with boisterous merriment. Mr. Baber mentions a Szechuan coolie, who burst into a delighted laugh at the spectacle of two dogs devouring a corpse on the tow-path. Mr. Meadows tells us that his Chinese teacher laughed till he held his sides at the amusing death of his most constant companion. It is no explanation of these strange exhibitions, often observed in the case of parents at the death of children of whom they were fond, that long grief has dried up its external expression, for there is a wide distinction between a silent grief, and that rude mockery of natural feeling which offends the instincts of mankind.

It is, as we have often had occasion to remark, several hundred years since foreigners began to have commercial relations with the Chinese. There have been multiplied testimonies to the business honesty of those with whom these relations have been held. Without generalizing to a degree which might be precarious, it is safe to say that there must be a good basis for testimonies of this sort. As a specimen of what these testimonies are, we may quote the words of Mr. Ewen Cameron, manager of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, on the recent occasion of his farewell to Shanghai. "I have referred to the high commercial standing of the foreign community. The Chinese are in no way behind us ourselves in that respect, in fact, I know of no people in the world I would sooner trust than the Chinese merchant and banker. Of course there are exceptions to every rule, but to show that I have good reasons for making such a strong statement, I may mention that for the last twenty-five years the Bank has been doing a very large business with Chinese in Shanghai, amounting, I should say, to hundreds of millions of taels, and we have never yet met with a defaulting Chinaman." Whether there is an essential difference between Chinese business as conducted by wholesale, and that by retail, we have no means of knowing. But without abating in the least from the value of the testimonies to which reference has been made, it is a fair question whether a large part of results noted are not due to the admirable system of mutual responsibility already described, a system which Western nations would do well

to imitate. It is only natural that foreigners doing business with the Chinese should avail themselves to the fullest extent of such commercial safeguards as exist, and for such results as are thus attained, the Chinese are unquestionably entitled to the fullest credit. Yet after all such acknowledgements are made, it remains true as testified by a vast array of witnesses, and by wide and long observation, that the commerce of the Chinese is a gigantic example of the national insincerity. An interesting essay has been written by one who knew of what he was affirming, on the process by which in ordinary trade two Chinese each succeed in cheating the other. The relation of two such individuals is generally the relation between Jacob and Laban, or as the Chinese phrase runs, it is the iron brush meeting the brass washdish. It is a popular proverb that to put a lad into trade is to ruin him. False weights, false measures, false currency, and false goods, these are phenomena from which it is difficult to escape in China. Even in the great establishments which put up conspicuous signs, notifying the public that they will here find "goods genuine, prices real," "positively no two prices," the state of things does not correspond to the surface seeming. We by no means intend to affirm such a proposition as that there is no honesty to be found in China, but only that, so far as our experience and observation go, *it is literally impossible to be sure of finding it anywhere.* How can it be otherwise with a people who have so little regard for truth? A well dressed scholar who meets a foreigner, does not hesitate to affirm in reply to a question, that *he cannot read*, and then when a little book has been handed him to look at, he does not hesitate to slink away in the crowd without paying the three cash which is the cost. He has no sense of shame at such a proceeding, but rather a thrill of joy that he has circumvented the silly foreigner, who has so little astuteness as to trust a total stranger. It is very common for a man who is buying from a foreigner to give a cash less than the proper amount, alleging that he has not another cash with him. When he is informed that there is one in his ear at the moment, he takes it out with reluctance, feeling that he has been defrauded. In like manner a man who has spent "an old half day" in trying to get something free of cost, on the ground that he is totally without money, will at the last draw forth a string of a thousand cash, hand it to you with an air of melancholy, and

request you to take out the proper amount. But if he is believed, and gets something for nothing, he departs with a keen joy in his heart, like that of one who has slain a serpent.

While it is undoubtedly true that many of the evils which are so conspicuous in Chinese social life are to be found also in Western lands, it is of the utmost importance clearly to perceive the points of essential contrast. One of these we take to be that already mentioned, in that insincerity in China, while not always to be met with, *is always to be looked for.* Instances of this have been already cited in speaking of other topics, and others might be referred to at almost any length.

One of the most characteristic, and for that reason most worthy of notice, is the method in which ordinary weddings and funerals are conducted. In China, each of these occasions involves the expenditure of a great deal of money and the consumption of a great deal of food. In each case, the family which has to provide for the feasts is regarded by all persons concerned as a goose which is to be stripped of as much of its down as possible. All friends of the family are supposed to send in their contributions in the shape of money or food, and each one who sends in either money or food, makes it his business to see that what he takes out in eating is as much more than what he put in as possible. In the case of women this is easy, for each of them attends with one or more small children, which, as in other parts of the world, are the terror and the despair of the hosts. The kitchen is at some distance from the hall in which the feast is served, and on these occasions it is well understood, that all that any one can succeed in carrying off for himself is in a manner lawful plunder. We are assured on the best authority, that in the case of rich families, it is often the case that there is as much stolen as there is eaten, the very dishes themselves often disappearing in the confusion. But why, asks the innocent foreigner, does not the master of the house surround himself with his own people, so that he can be sure of fair treatment? The answer is, that this is exactly the root of the trouble. No family is so rich as not to have a cloud of poor relatives, and these occasions are the ones in which these poor relatives reap the only benefits which they derive from their kinship with these who are better off than themselves. If the master of the house were to exclude them

altogether, they would not only steal in some other way, but they would take care to do so in such a manner that he would be disgraced by the insufficiency of his provision, a disgrace which, it need hardly be said, he dreads more even than the loss of his goods. Well aware of this state of things, he considers it cheaper to let the pilferers have their way, which they always do.

But this is by no means all. The gifts of each guest are sent to a particular place, and an exact entry of them is made at the time, so that the master of the house may know how much he is out of pocket when the affair is over. The most skilful writer of accounts in the village is asked to superintend the registration of the gifts, which he is generally willing enough to do. But he does not do it for nothing. Much of the money is sent in brass cash, and it is easy to make a mistake of a few hundred in the counting, and to transfer the balance to the leg of his trousers, where it will never be seen. Some of the money will be in cash notes, and if so the concealment of them is all the easier, and the accounts will be so arranged as to cover the deficit, or a name may be omitted altogether, for the guests do not go to the host with matters of this sort. If a guest is on good terms with the keeper of accounts, it is easy to make an entry of a thousand cash, which has no corresponding funds to represent it and then to "cover it in" with the rest, by which means a guest gets credit for a handsome contribution which has never made. It is easy to see how everyone of these evils could be wholly prevented. If each guest, for example, were to bring a card, which he left with the host, and then send the money with a similar card to the accountant, the latter would have no opportunity to commit petty frauds, but in that case the guest would find the temptation to write a fictitious amount too strong for him, as the keeper of accounts would then certainly be suspected. Besides, the master of the house will himself be the keeper of accounts for some one else at some other time, and he perhaps doubts whether it is altogether for his own highest interest to hedge up the way too closely. In all departments of their life, family, political, and national, the Chinese act upon the assumption that too strong a pressure is sure to result in an explosion. For this reason, every prudent Chinese is by the proverbs of everyday life, as well as by his own instincts, prevented from pressing things to extremities.

An interesting volume remains to be written by some one who has the requisite knowledge, on the theory and practice of Chinese squeezes, a practice which extends from the Emperor on his throne to the lowest beggar in the Empire. With that practical sagacity for which they are so deservedly noted, the Chinese have reduced this business to a perfect system, which can no more be escaped, than one can escape the pressure of the atmosphere. Vicious and demoralizing as the system is, it is not easy to see how it can be done away with, except by a complete reorganization of the Empire. The results of this state of things, and of the characteristics of the Chinese which have led to this state of things, is that it is very difficult for a foreigner to have to do with the Chinese in a practical way, and on any extended scale, and yet contrive to preserve his reputation—should he be so fortunate as to have one—as a "Superior Man." It is a proverb constantly quoted, and self-verifying, that carters, boatmen, inn-keepers, coolies, and middle-men, irrespective of any specific offence, all deserve to be killed on general principles. The relation of this class of persons and others like them to foreigners is peculiar, for it is known that foreigners will consent to a great deal of imposition, rather than to have a "social typhoon," for which they generally lack both the taste and the talent; yet it is by the "social typhoon" that in case of any supposed breach of equity on the part of Chinese toward Chinese, the social atmosphere is brought at last to a state of equilibrium. He must be a rare man who has no blind side upon which those Chinese who choose to do so cannot get. Not to be too suspicious, and not to be too confiding, is a rare illustration of the golden mean. If one exhibits that just disapprobation toward insincerity and wrong-doing which it seems to demand, the Chinese, who are shrewd judges of human nature, set it down to our discredit, as a mark of "temper," while if we maintain the placid demeanour of a Buddha absorbed in his Nirvana, a demeanour which is not easy for all temperaments at all times—we are at once marked as fit subjects for further and indefinite exactions That was a typical Chinese, who being in foreign employ, saw one day a peddler on the street, vending little clay images of foreigners, cleverly executed and in appropriate costume. Stopping for a moment to examine them, he said to the dealer in images, "Ah, you play with these toys; I play with the real things."

It is unnecessary to do more than to allude in passing to the fact that the Chinese government, so far as it is knowable, appears to be a gigantic example of the trait which we are discussing. Instances are to be found in the entire history of foreign relations with China, and one might almost say in all that is known of the relations of Chinese officials to the people. A single but compendious illustration is to be found in those virtuous proclamations which are issued with such unfailing regularity, in such superlative abundance, with such felicity of diction, on all varieties of subjects, and from all grades of officials. One thing only is lacking, namely reality, for these fine commands are not intended to be enforced. This is quite understood by all concerned, and on this point there are no illusions. "The life and state papers of a Chinese statesman like the Confessions of Rousseau abound in the finest sentiments, and the foulest deeds. He cuts off ten thousand heads, and cites a passage from Mencius about the sanctity of human life. He pockets the money given him to repair an embankment, and thus inundates a province: and he deplores the land lost to the cultivator of the soil. He makes a treaty which he secretly declares to be only a deception for the moment, and he declaims against the crime of perjury." Doubtless there may be pure-minded and upright officials in China, it is very hard to find them, and from the nature of their environment, they are utterly helpless to accomplish the good which they may have at heart. When we compare the actual condition of those who have had the best opportunity to become acquainted with the Chinese classics, with the teachings of these classics, we gain a vivid conception of how practically inert they have been to bring society to their high standard.

We have already alluded to the word which is translated "Sincerity" in the list of Five Constant Virtues. There is another character found in the "Doctrine of the Mean," also rendered sincerity, and in regard to which there has been much misunderstanding and dispute. In his essay on the notions of the Chinese concerning God and Spirits, Dr. Legge cites a work by a Sung dynasty writer, the title of which is *The perspicuous Explanation of the Four Books*. "Sincerity," says the author, "is the hinge of the Chung Yung, and we find it for the first time in this chapter. The scholars of the Han dynasty were all ignorant of its meaning."

Proceeding then to unfold the history of the exegesis of this word, the author at last clarifies the matter by the following announcement: "Sincerity is the principle of order, according to which the active-passive, primordial substance produces and transforms." The reduction of the simple term "sincerity," to a purely technical expression, like "principle of order," is noteworthy. It shows to what extremity of interpretation the commentators were driven. No wonder that the Rev. David Collie, the first translator of the Classics, when he considered the extraordinary predicates attached to "sincerity" in the doctrine of the Mean, exclaimed in despair, "What is this sincerity?" and is it any wonder if the unsympathetic foreigner should give it up as a Sphinx riddle, and infer from the circumstance that it is said to have "no sound nor smell," that even in classical times their was not enough of it for a sample; or if he should be led to suppose from its predicate of "entire ceaselessness," combined with its practical non-existence, that it is a merely theoretical expression, like the sign for infinity, denoting "Equilibrium and harmony in perfection." Whatever it was, it is at present as extinct as the dodo, and with no greater prospect of resuscitation.

"How many Chinese have you ever known whom you would implicitly trust?" This question must be understood to relate only to those who have come under no influences outside of regular Chinese education. Different replies will be given by different persons according to their experience, and according to their standard of judging of Chinese character. Most foreigners would probably reply, "a very few," "six or eight," "a dozen," as the case may be. Occasionally the answer will be, "a great many, more that I can remember." But we must believe that intelligent and discriminating observers who can truthfully give the latter reply, are exceedingly few in number.

It is always prudent to observe what things a people take for granted and to act accordingly. As we have seen in the discussion of mutual suspicion as a factor in Chinese social life, the Chinese take it for granted that they are not to trust others, for reasons which they well understand. It is precisely this state of things which makes the future of China so full of uncertainty. The governing class as a whole, is not the best but the worst in the Empire. An intelligent Taotai remarked to a foreigner, that "the

officials under the Emperor are all bad men and ought to be killed, but it would be of no use to kill us, as the next incumbents would be just as bad as we." The serpent, as the Chinese adage runs, knows his own hole, and it is a significant fact, that the official class in China is profoundly distrusted by the class next below it, the mercantile. There is wealth enough in China to develop the resources of the Empire, if there were but the confidence, without which timid capital will not emerge from its hiding place. There is learning enough in China for all its needs. There is no lack of talent of every description. But without mutual confidence based upon real sincerity of purpose, all these are insufficient for the regeneration of the Empire.

A few months ago the writer was consulted by an intelligent Chinese, in regard to the possibility of doing something for the relief of a district which has great trouble with its wells, which are made in the usual Chinese way, and bricked up by a wall begun from the top, lowered as the well is deepened. But in this particular locality, the soil is of such a character, that after a time *the whole ground sinks, taking the well and its brick lining with it*, leaving only a hole which eventually caves in and becomes dry. Like the attempt to remedy the evils of this unfortunate district in the province of Chihli, is any prescription to cure the ills from which China is suffering and has long suffered, *which does not go deep enough to reach the roots of character.* All susperficial treatment will prove at last to be but burying cartloads of excellent material in a Slough of Despond.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE ABSENCE OF ALTRUISM.

ALTRUISM, which has of late become a very popular term in Western lands, is defined as "regard for others, both natural and moral; devotion to the interests of others; unselfishness; opposed to egoism." The Confucian classics contain several explicit recognitions of the principle, that what one does not wish done to himself, he should not to do others. This is the golden rule in its negative form, and is one of the high-water marks of Chinese morality. The practice of the Chinese, like that of other people, does not come up to their theoretical standard. What that practice is, and how far it fails to conform to those standards, can only be ascertained by a wide survey of their social life. However wide such a survey may be, it is always open to the objection that it is not wide enough, for there can be no generalisation that takes account of more than an infinitesimal part of even the known facts; and in regard to the social life of the Chinese there is much which is not known at all, and much more which is known imperfectly. What we have to say upon this subject, will take cognizance in detail of the following aspects of Chinese life:—The Family: The relation of neighbours to neighbours, the mutual relation of one village to another, the relation of Chinese to strangers of their own race, the relation of the officials and of the government to the people, and the general relation of Chinese to foreigners. As this is one of the most important and likewise one of the last characteristics of the Chinese, to which we wish to draw attention, we must bespeak the reader's considerate attention, once again assuring him that the views presented have not been suddenly reached, but are the results of the slow accumulation of evidence too strong and too varied to be ignored or resisted.

It must ever be borne in mind that the population of China is dense The disasters of flood and famine are of periodical

occurrence in almost all parts of the Empire. The Chinese desire for posterity is so overmastering a passion, that circumstances which ought to operate as an effectual check upon population, and which in many other countries would do so, appear to be in China relatively inefficient for that purpose. The very poorest people continue to marry their children at an early age and these children bring up large families, just as if there were any provision for their maintenance. The result of these and other causes is, that a large proportion of the population lives in the most literal sense from hand to mouth. This may be said to be the universal condition of day labourers, and it is a condition from which there appears to be no possibility of escape. No foreigner can long deal with the ordinary Chinese whom he everywhere meets, without at once becoming aware of the fact that hardly any one has any ready money. The moment that anything whatever is to be done, the first demand is for cash, that those who are to do it may get something to eat, the presumption being that as yet they have had nothing. It is often very hard even for well-to-do people to raise the most moderate sums of money, when it suddenly becomes necessary to do so. There is a most significant expression commonly employed on such occasions, which speaks of a man who is obliged to collect a sum with which to prosecute a law-suit, to arrange for a funeral, and the like, as "putting through a famine," that is, acting like a starving person, in the urgency and persistency of his demands for help. None but those who are well off ever expect to be able to manage affairs of this sort without assistance.

Side by side with this chronic need of money, is the correlative fact that *the great mass of people with whom foreigners come into contact, appear to be more or less deeply in debt.* The universal necessity for borrowing money is balanced by the universal necessity for lending it. Considering the great and constant risks involved, it is amazing with what facility money is borrowed and lent, by all classes of people. This is due in part to the absence of those forms of investment, such as savings banks, which in Occidental lands now bring the possibility of reasonably safe deposit within the reach of the poorest people. But the promiscuous loaning of money is accompanied by a condition to which reference has been already made, in speaking of the lack of mutual confidence, to wit the high rate of interest. While three per cent. a month,

or even more, is a common rate, in special cases and for peculiar exigencies the charge is much higher, rising it is said in some instances to the ruinous extortion *of one per cent. a day.*

Hopeless poverty is the most prominent fact in the Chinese Empire, and the bearing of this fact upon the relations of the people to one another must be evident to the most careless observer.

Some years ago an officer in charge of agricultural interests in one of the states of the Mississippi valley, reported that experiments had been made carefully, to show what kind of feeding is most profitable in raising pigs. Two animals were selected of equal age and size. One was fed two pounds and a quarter of food each day, and thrived in a marked degree. The other was fed only two pounds each day, and *squealed all the time.* The quarter of a pound of food made all the difference. It is no wonder that when so many Chinese are never sufficiently nourished, that there is now and then one who "squeals all the time." The only wonder is, that no more of them do so.

People who have no visible means of support, or no means which are at all adequate, and who have no idea where their next meal is to come from, are not in any part of the planet distinguished for their "altruism." The result of the pressure for the means of subsistence, and of the habits which this pressure cultivates and fixes, even after the immediate demand is no longer urgent, is to bring life down to a hard materialistic basis, in which money and food are the prominent facts. Money and food are in fact the two *foci* of the Chinese ellipse, and it is about them as centres that the whole social life of the people revolves.

In speaking of filial piety among the Chinese, we have endeavoured to do justice to the strong moral convictions of the people in general as to the duty of proper treatment of the aged. Perhaps there is no other subject to which the national conscience so quickly and so uniformly responds. Yet whoever has the opportunity of intimate acquaintance with the inner aspects of Chinese social life, is well aware that it is not uncommon to find parents who are insufficiently provided with food. The writer is personally acquainted with several such, and the facts are certified not only by the affirmation of the old people themselves, but by the general consensus of the neighbours who are in all cases

thoroughly familiar with the particulars. Cases of harsh treatment of parents, even to the extent of beating them, can be heard of by careful and judicious enquiry, but they are certainly not very common, and in such cases the sentiment of the family, the clan, and the village is always against the offenders, although they sometimes escape punishment.

In the Hsien district where the writer lives, there have been two instances of this sort within recent years. In one of them, a man after beating his own mother, took a gun and shot at her, but was compelled by public opinion to run away from home. He subsequently returned, made an apology through an uncle, and he and his mother are still living together and since then he has never once tried to kill her! In another village but a few miles distant from this one, a wealthy man not many years ago actually killed his father with an axe, because he was ashamed of the old man's poverty-stricken appearance! In this case the guilty son was sent to the provincial capital for trial and was executed by the slicing process. On the other hand, in the same town with the man who shot at his mother, lives a dumb man, whose zeal in caring for his aged mother has long since attracted public notice; and by means of a representation of the local magistrate, the dumb man has been honoured by the hanging of a lacquered tablet over his humble door, certifying to his virtues.

In the village where these lines are written, lives an old lady seventy-two years of age, who has been for almost a generation a refugee from her home. She is entirely blind, and has been so for many years, and yet she contrives to cook, make her own trifling purchases, spin thread, which she sells at the markets, and laboriously gather fuel a straw at a time, wherever she can find it. It is impossible even for a Chinese to live in a condition of greater "bitterness" than this old woman, whose existence has only been prolonged by the kindness of some of her neighbours. Yet the object of this kindness has two sons living, who at last accounts were perfectly aware of their mother's condition, in which they have never taken the smallest interest, and with whom they have not even communicated, for more than twenty years.* There is a

* Since this paragraph was written, a nephew of this lady, himself a refugee from a region devastated by the Yellow River, accidentally learned of her whereabouts. When his aunt left home he was a mere child. He now

tradition of an old lady who remarked of the doctrine of total depravity, that it is a very good one, "if it is only lived up to." The same observation might be made with justice on the Chinese theory of filial piety.

It was a saying of Geo. D. Prentice, a distinguished Kentucky editor, that man was the principal object in creation, woman being merely "a side issue." The phrase is a literal expression of the position of a wife in a Chinese family. The object had in view in matrimony by the family of the girl is to get rid of supporting her. The object on the part of the husband's family is to propagate that family. These objects are not in themselves open to criticism, except on the ground of a too complete occupation of the field of human motives. But in China no one indulges in any illusions on the subject.

That which is true of the marriages of those in the ordinary walks of life, is pre-eminently true of the poorer classes. It is a common observation in regard to a widow who has re-married, that "now she will not starve." It is a popular proverb that a second husband and a second wife are husband and wife only as long as there is anything to eat; when the food supply fails, each shifts for him or herself. In times of famine relief, cases have often been observed where the husband simply abandons the wife and the children, leaving them to pick up a wretched subsistence, or to starve. In many instances daughters-in-law were sent back to their mothers' family to be supported or starved as the event might be. "She is your daughter, take care of her yourself." In other cases where special food was given by distributors of famine relief to women who were nursing small infants, it was sometimes found that this allowance had been taken from the women, and devoured by the men, although these instances were probably exceptional.

had a wife and several children, and after wandering far and wide, he had found a temporary abode in a village but a few miles from the one in which his aunt made her home. Having ascertained that his aunt was largely supported by the kindness of the neigbours, this affectionate nephew hastened to claim relationship, proposing to his aunt that he should come and live with her, that is live *upon* her. This offer she wisely declined. A few months later he departed for regions unknown, leaving his wife and children without support of any kind. They soon made their appearance in the aunt's village, and inserted themselves into her narrow dwelling, reducing her to extreme grief and despair.

While it would be obviously unfair to judge a people only by the phenomena of such years as those of great famine, there is an important sense in which such occasions are a species of touchstone by which the underlying principles of social life may be ascertained with more accuracy and certainty than on ordinary occasions. The sale of wives and of children in China is a practice not confined to years of peculiar distress, but during those years it is carried on to an extent which throws all ordinary transactions of this nature into insignificance. It is perfectly well known to those acquainted with the facts, that during the early part of the current year, in many districts stricken with a famine only less grievous than those of eleven and twelve years ago, the sale of women and children was conducted as openly as that of mules and donkeys, the only essential difference being that the former were not driven to market. During the great famine of 1878, which extended over nearly all parts of the three most northern provinces, as well as further south, so great a traffic sprung up in women and girls who were exported to the central provinces, that in some places it was difficult to hire a cart, as they had all been engaged in the transportation of the newly purchased females to the regions where they were to be disposed of. These transactions must not be confounded with the trade in girls which exists in Singapore and Hongkong and elsewhere, and which it is so difficult for British officers to detect and break up. In the cases to which reference is now made, young women were taken from a region where they were in a condition of starvation, and where the population was too redundant, to a region which had been depopulated by the T'ai-p'ing rebels, and where for many years wives had been hard to procure. It is one of the most melancholy features of this strange state of affairs, that the enforced sales of members of Chinese families to distant provinces was probably the best thing for all parties, and perhaps the only way in which the lives both of those who were sold as well as the lives of those who sold them, could be preserved.

In speaking of the Chinese theory and practice of filial piety, references have been made to that singular perversion of human nature, by which the birth of one half of the children of China is regarded by their parents as a calamity. Daughters in China are from the beginning of their existence more or less unwelcome,

This fact has a most important bearing on their whole subsequent career, and furnishes many significant illustrations of the absence of altruism.

The details of customs in various localities differ widely, so that generalisations here as elsewhere are precarious, but the principles are doubtless substantially the same. The age at which marriages take places in China is very much earlier than that in Western lands, though we have never heard of anything in China at all comparable to the terrible child-marriages of India. But in some regions, it is the fashion to marry the boys at the age of from fifteen to twenty or even younger, while the girls to whom they are married are several years their seniors. No one will give any explanation of this eccentricity, unless it be that contained in a popular proverb about the man who buys a donkey and rides on its neck instead of close to the tail, in Chinese fashion—namely, that "he likes that way best." But in the case of adult brides yoked to adolescent bride-grooms, the reasons for the practice are easy to be understood, when once ascertained. It is the family of the boy, that "holds up its head," and that of the girl must take such terms as it can get. A daughter-in-law is regarded as a servant for the whole family, which is precisely her position, and in getting a servant, it is obviously desirable to get one who is strong and well grown, and who has already been taught the domestic accomplishments of cooking, sewing, and whatever industries may be the means of livelihood in that particular region, rather than a child who has little strength or capacity. Thus we have known of a case where a buxom young woman of twenty was married to a slip of a boy literally only half her age, and in the early years of their wedded life she had the pleasure of nursing him through the small-pox, which is considered as a disease of infancy.

Mothers and daughters who pass their days in the narrow confinement of a Chinese court, under the conditions of Chinese life, are not likely to lack topics of disagreement, in which abusive language is indulged in with a freedom which the unconstraint of every day life tends to promote. It is a popular saying, full of significance to those who know Chinese homes, that a mother cannot by reviling her own daughter make her cease to be her own daughter! When a daughter is once married, she is regarded as having no more relations with her family, than those which are

inseparable from community of origin. There is a deep-seated reason for omitting daughters from all family register. *She is no longer our daughter, but the daughter-in-law of some one else.* Human nature will assert itself, in requiring visits to the mother's home, at more or less frequent intervals, according to the local usage. In some districts these visits are very numerous and very prolonged, while in others the custom seems to be to make them as few as possible, and liable to almost complete suspension for long periods in case of a death in the family. But whatever the details of usage, the principle holds good, that the daughter-in-law belongs to the family of which she has become a part. When she goes to her mother's home, she goes on a strictly business basis. She takes with her it may be a quantity of sewing for her husband's family, which the wife's family must help her get through with. She is accompanied on each of these visits by as many of her children as possible, both to have her take care of them, and to have them out of the way when she is not at hand to look after them, and most especially to have them fed at the expense of the family of the maternal grandmother for as long a time as possible. In regions where visits of this sort are frequent, and where there are many daughters in a family, their constant raids on the old home are a source of perpetual terror to the whole family, and a serious tax on the common resources. For this reason these visits are often discouraged by the father and the brothers, while secretly favoured by the mothers. But as local custom fixes for them certain epochs, such as a definite date after the New-Year, special feast days, etc., the visits cannot be interdicted.

A weary woman whose occupation of making meat dumplings for sale at the daily markets always obliged her to rise long before daylight, and who was not infrequently visited by her married daughters with their troops of little ones, some of whom spent the night in tumbling over their poor grandmother (because their mothers "could not take care of so many"), complained to the writer of the grievous nature of the burden. To the natural enquiry why she did not send them home when they became so troublesome, she remarked with evident sincerity, "*I can't succeed in pushing them out!*" When the daughter-in-law returns to her mother-in-law it is true of her, as the adage says of a thief, that she never comes back empty-handed. She must take a present of

some sort for her mother-in-law, generally food. Neglect of this established rite, or inability to comply with it, will soon result in dramatic scenes. If the daughter is married into a family which is poor, or which has become so, and if she has brothers who are married, she will find that her visits to her mother are, in the language of the physicians, "contra-indicated." There is war between the daughters-in-law of a family and the married sisters of the same family, like that between the Philistines and the children of Israel, each regarding the territory as peculiarly its own, and the other party as interlopers. If the daughters-in-law are strong enough to do so, they will, like the Philistines, levy a tax upon the enemy whom they cannot altogether exterminate or drive out. A woman with whom the writer has long been acquainted informed him not long ago that for a year and a half she had been forbidden by the wives of her brothers from visiting her aged mother, who was blind and unable to travel the two or three miles necessary to go to see her daughter! The reason for this embargo was the deep poverty of the daughter, who was unable to bring a present when she came, albeit she should have taken a present back with her when she returned to her mother-in-law. In order to make the present which will render her visits to her mother's family agreeable all round, the daughter-in-law is sometimes obliged to steal something from the family of the mother-in-law. When this is discovered, it will result in an "unpleasantness." If it is not specifically discovered, it is suspected, and is called by the generic name of "leak-at-the-bottom," in allusion to the difficulty of detection, and to the seriousness of its results if continued. It is a proverb that no family can stand the strain of a continued "bottom-leak." One of the *facetiæ* of the Chinese represents two old women as meeting after a long separation, and making enquiries as to each other's families. "How is your son's business?" says one, "and what kind of a daughter-in-law have you?" "My son's business is fairly good," was the reply, "but the daughter-in-law is bad—she steals from us to give to her mother." "And your married daughter, how is it with her?" "Ah!" was the reply, "*If it were not for the help we get from her, we should not be able to get on at all!*"

In speaking of the absence of sympathy, reference was made to the bitter lot of Chinese concubines. The term used to denote

the relation between wives and concubines is that most expressive phrase, "sipping vinegar." This is proverbially a "thing to be avoided," and from this association, that phrase has come to be employed as a euphemism for vinegar, as when a waiter enquires of a guest at an inn what he wishes for his meal, he asks, "Do you want the 'thing-to-be-avoided'"? But the certainty of trouble in the family is by no means confined to the occasions when principal and secondary wives are to be found living in the same establishment. The Chinese believe that the graves of successive wives should be placed at a due distance from each other, until their common husband has died, when the bodies are to be taken up, and may be placed on each side of him. The theory is that "e'en in their ashes live their wonted fires," and that the ghosts of wives so buried as to be adjacent to one another, with no intervening husband as peace-maker, would be certain to maintain a war which would render the lives of surviving members of the family scarcely worth living. At first sight this may appear merely a curious superstition, with no especial bearing on practical affairs, but it is in reality a most serious matter, and one which enters into the marrow of one's existence.

The writer is acquainted with a Chinese who ignored this superstition, and buried his second wife alongside the first. The neighbours of the mother of the second wife, filled her ears with the prophecies of the most deadly disaster, if this state of things were to be tolerated. She and her friends came to the village where the husband of the deceased woman lived, expostulated, threatened and besought him by turns, to move the corpse of his late wife away from the fury of the former one. They assured him that his late wife's ghost was constantly seen in her native village, and that trouble was most imminent. Irritated by their clamour, and being naturally of an obstinate disposition, the husband refused to comply with their request, but at last consented to accompany them to their village, and witness the alleged outbreak of the spirit, which he promised to quell. He remained two days, during which time all was perfectly quiet, but he had not gone a quarter of a mile on his way home, than he was sent after in haste, on the alleged ground that his late wife's ghost had broken loose again. As no external evidence was offered to him of the supposed trouble, he positively refused to move the body, and the matter was allowed to drop.

It has been already remarked elsewhere that the beating of Chinese wives by their husbands is regarded as a matter of course. One of the first questions which is asked of foreign ladies, by the Chinese women with whom they become well acquainted, is, "Does he not beat you?" The replies are generally received with incredulity. On one occasion when these enquires had been made and answered as usual, none of the Chinese women present could boast of not having been beaten, except the old grandmother who was more than eighty years of age. Her recipe was of the simplest description, but for a Chinese woman most difficult, to wit to hold her tongue. There are probably very few Chinese women to whom this method ever occurred, or who would be capable of adopting it if it had occurred to them. "When you are young, and just married," said the old lady, "your husband does not like to beat you. When you get older and have a troop of children, if he beats you they all come out shrieking and making such a clamour that he dislikes to face it. And when you are old, he does not care to begin for the first time, and there you are, never having been beaten all your life!"

Unfortunately this sound domestic philosophy is for the most part theoretical. Knowing that one of the sons of this old lady had a wife who was a thorn in the flesh, the writer once enquired a little into their matrimonial relations, and ascertained what was indeed a matter of general notoriety among the inhabitants of the large town in which she lived, that these relations were at times what the diplomatists term "strained." The husband was a man of some education, less than forty years of age, his wife a woman rather taller than himself, and not unpleasing in appearance. There was never anything in their demeanour to indicate that they were in any respects different from any of their neighbours, as indeed they were not. This semi-literary man informed us that he had beaten his wife times without number. Sometimes he had used a club two feet long and an inch or two in thickness, made of a particularly hard wood. Sometimes he had used an ash-scraper, which happened to be the most convenient weapon. Once he beat her until his arm was tired, and he was all of a tremble. During all this time, she was shrieking, "Mother, Mother!" but the moment he stopped, she began reviling him, on which he resumed the beating, and she resumed her invocations

to her "Niang." On one of these occasions she had been pregnant, for four or five months. Two days after, she jumped into a deep well, but was hauled out by a rope. The child lived, strange to say, but was smothered at the age of one month, by being lain upon. On another occasion she hung herself with her girdle, which broke, leaving her in a heap on the ground from which she refused to rise. At another time she ate two handfuls of a poisonous rouge-powder, but nothing came of it! Another Chinese woman known to the writer, felt deeply humiliated at having been beaten by her husband. Being urged to forgive him, she at last consented, but declared that she would never be buried in the same grave yard with him—never!

M. Huc tells a story, which to many of his readers must have seemed an idle tale, of a Chinese husband who had a wife with whom he had lived happily for two years. But having conceived the idea that people were laughing at him, because he had never beaten his wife, he determined to make a beginning in such a way as to impress every spectator, and accordingly, though he had no fault to find with her, he beat his wife to such an extent that she could neither move nor speak, and although her husband was kind enough to admit that he was in error, she died two days afterwards in terrible convulsions. In the chapter on the absence of sympathy, reference was made to the daughter of a woman employed as a nurse in a foreign family, the husband of which daughter had abused her severely. Within the short time since that account was written, this young woman has again fallen into deep trouble. Her husband came into the house one day when she was engaged in some domestic occupation and without any anger in his manner told her to take off her clothes. She dared not refuse, and he then cruelly beat her with a thorny stick, till the blood ran. She was more terrified by this experience than by all that had gone before, on account of the deliberate malice, and the absence of any cause. A man who will beat his wife till she streams with blood, while he is a careful not to injure her garments with the thorns, is not unlikely to beat her because he dreads the ridicule of the neighbours.

Within the past few days word has been brought to the writer that the wife of a younger brother of a man living on the premises has swallowed opium, and thus committed suicide. Why did she

do so? Because her husband beat her. And why did her husband beat her? Because she had irritated the neighbours over the wall by reviling them. And why did she revile her neighbours? Because they had her property in their charge, and she took it for granted that they would not give it up, and revenged herself in advance by reviling them. To be more explicit; the eggs laid by domestic fowls are often considered by the women of the family as their perquisites. In this instance a hen had flown over the neighbours' wall, and had been heard to cackle, implying that the egg had been laid over there. No one appears to have even contemplated the possibility that the egg could be regained. The woman accordingly reviled the neighbours, with consequences already described. The value of the egg, at current rates, was three cash. About the same time that this happened, a case occurred in a city more than a thousand miles distant, in which a Chinese killed another in a dispute which involved only one cash!

As we have noticed in speaking of filial piety, it is a constituent part of the theory that the younger are relatively of little account. They are valued principally for what they may become, and not for what they are. Thus the practice of most Western lands is in China reversed. The youngest of three travellers is proverbially made to take the brunt of all hardships. The youngest servant is uniformly the common drudge of the rest. In the grinding poverty of the mass of the people, it is not strange that the spirit even of a Chinese boy often rebels against the sharp limitations to which he finds himself pinned, and that he not infrequently runs away. That he almost invariably steers of some relative or friend, has been already remarked in speaking of parasitism. But the boy who has made up his mind to go will seldom fail to find some slight thread by which he may attach himself to some one else. The causes for this behaviour on the part of boys are various, but so far as we have observed, the harsh treatment of others is by far the most common.

In a country like China, *the poor have no time to be sick.* Ailments of women and children are apt to be treated by the men of the family as of no consequence, and are constantly allowed to run into incurable maladies, because there was no time to attend

to them, or because the man "could not afford it.* In one case with which we happened to be acquainted of harsh treatment by a father, the lad fled several hundred miles, to Tientsin, whence he returned, after a month's absence, for the truly amazing reason that he was unable to endure the smells of that fragrant metropolis! In another case, a boy recently recovered from a run of typhus fever, being possessed by the hearty appetite common to such patients, and finding the coarse black bread of the family fare, hard eating, went to a local market, and indulged in the luxury of expending cash to the value of about twenty cents. For this he was severely reproved by his father, upon which the lad ran away to Manchuria, an unfailing resort of lads all over the north-eastern provinces, and was never heard of again.

Enough has already been said to make it apparent that there is in most Chinese homes abundant material for domestic conflagrations, if it is duly fanned, and unfortunately there is seldom any permanent lack of fanning. The Chinese are a most loquacious race, and even the dullest of them can become eloquent in defence of his rights, real or supposed. A woman in an American court begged the judge to grant her a divorce, on the ground that she had been married seventeen years, and that all that time her husband had "jawed constant." Whether his meals were or were not ready, whether his buttons were or were not sewed on, whatever the conditions, he "jawed constant." This grave criticism is applicable to many homes in "nominally Christian lands," but to vastly more in China. Indeed the precise observation of the woman just quoted was made in the writer's hearing, concerning an acquaintance, who made the life of his daughter-in-law a burden. The occasions for this unceasing "jaw" are as numerous as the objects and interests with which human beings have to do. Money, food, clothes, children and their squabbles, a chicken, a dog, anything or nothing, will serve

* The degree of interest felt by some Chinese in their wives, was illustrated by a remark made to the writer, by a man who had imprudently married a widow with several children. He was explaining the undesirability of continuing to occupy the shed in which the family had made their temporary abode, and which had been seriously undermined by the heavy rains, so that it was liable at any time to fall, and kill the occupants. He added apologetically, "Crushing to death a grown person (that is, his wife) would be a matter of no consequence, but it would be a pity to smash the children!"

as the first loop on which will be knit a complicated tangle of quarrel, which will not go far without words of reviling which increase the fury of the disputants in a ten-fold ratio.

In speaking of the "Social Typhoons" of Chinese life, these quarrels have been already fully described, and need only be mentioned here, in order to illustrate the manner in which the absence of altruism acts in the details of every day life. Such quarrels, in which the principals lose all control of themselves, shriek out words of reviling abuse at the highest possible pitch, and jump up and down in paroxysms of fury after the manner of a periodical geyser, are yet not inconsistent with that "peaceableness" which we have seen to be a distinctive Chinese trait. The water that boils over with rapidity when the pressure of the atmosphere is abnormally low, will likewise freeze quickly under a sudden lowering of the temperature. It is the same water, but subject to varying conditions.

One of the most enigmatical characters in the Chinese language is that which is used to denote the rise of passion, and which Sir Thomas Wade euphemistically translated "wrath-matter." The word *ch'i* is a most important one in all kinds of Chinese philosophy and in practical life. "*Ch'i*" is generated when a man becomes very angry, and the Chinese believe that there is some deadly connection between this developed "wrath-matter" and the human system generally, so that a violent passion is constantly named as the exciting cause of all varieties of diseases and ailments, such as blindness, failure of the heart, etc.* It is most fortunate for the

* Since this paragraph was written, a singular illustration of the results of unrestrained *ch'i* has come to the writer's notice. A man living in the mountains in central Shantung had a wife and several children, two of them of tender age. In October 1889 the wife died. This made the husband very angry—not, as he explained, in answer to a question—because he was specially attached to his wife, but because he could not see how he was to manage the small children. In a paroxsym of fury, he seized a Chinese razor, and made three deep cuts in his abdomen, so that several feet of intestines protruded. Some of his friends afterwards sewed up the wound with cotton thread. Six days later the man had another accession of *ch'i*, and not only ripped open the wound, but also tore off what was apparently a piece of the omentum several inches in length, and threw it away. On each occasion he was afterwards unable to remember what he had done. From these fearful injuries he nevertheless recovered, to such an extent that six months later he was able to walk several hundred miles to a foreign hospital for treatment. The abdominal wound had party closed, leaving only a small fistula, but the normal action of the bowels was interrupted. He is a striking exemplification of that physical vitality to which attention has been already directed.

Chinese that they have not the habit of carrying weapons about them, for if they had revolvers or swords like the former *samurai* class of Japan, it would not be possible to predict the amount of mischief which the daily evolution of *ch'i* would produce.

When a man or a woman is once seized of the idea that he has been deeply wronged, there is no power on earth which can prevent the sudden and often utterly ungovernable development of a certain amount of *ch'i*, or rather of a very uncertain amount of it. We have heard of a man who applied for baptism to an old and experienced missionary, and was very properly refused, whereupon he got a knife and threatened to attack the missionary to prove by ordeal of battle the claim to the rite of initiation. Happily this method of taking the kingdom of heaven by violence does not commend itself to most noviciates, but the underlying principle is one that is constantly acted upon in all varieties of Chinese social life. An old woman who will not take "no" for an answer, asks for financial assistance, and throws herself on the ground in front of your carter's mules. If she is run over, so much the better for her, for she is thus reasonably sure of a support for an indefinite period. An old vixen living in the same village as the writer, was constantly threatening to commit suicide, but though all her neighbours were willing to lend their aid, she never seemed to accomplish her purpose. At last she threw herself into one of the village mudholes with intent to drown, but found to her disgust that the water was only up to her neck. She lacked that versatility of invention which would have enabled her to put her head under water and hold it there, but contented herself with *reviling the whole village* at the top of her voice for her *contretemps*. The next time she was more successful.

If a wrong has been committed for which there is no legal redress, such as abuse of a married daughter beyond the point which custom warrants, a party of the injured friends will visit the house of the mother-in-law, and if they are resisted will engage in a pitched battle. If they are not resisted, and the offending persons have fled, the assailants will proceed to smash all the crockery in the house, the mirrors, the water-jars, and whatever else is frangible, and having thus allowed their *ch'i* to escape, they depart. If their coming is known in advance, the very first step is to remove all these articles to the house of some neighbour.

One of the Chinese newspapers recently mentioned a case which occurred in Peking, where a man had arranged for a wedding with a beautiful woman, who turned out to be "an ugly bald-headed, and elderly woman." The disappointed bridegroom became greatly enraged, struck the go-betweens, *reviled the whole company*, and smashed the bride's wedding outfit. Any Chinese would have acted in the same way, if he was in such relations to his environment, that he dared to do so.* It is after the preliminary paroxysms of *ch'i* have had opportunity to subside, that the work of the "peace-talker"—that useful factor in Chinese social life—is accomplished. Sometimes these most essential individuals are so deeply impressed with the necessity of peace, that even when the matter is not one which concerns them personally, they are willing to go from one to the other making *k'o-t'ous*, now to this side, and now to that, in the interests of harmony.

The writer once heard it remarked by an educated Chinese of considerable experience with his countrymen, that out of ten families of Chinese brothers, nine were filled with envy at the prosperity of those who were prosperous. Without endorsing such a generalization, a case of which we happened to hear on the very day that this observation was made, and the details of which were reported to the writer by the principal sufferer, may illustrate it.

Two brothers inherited a clerkship in a yamên. The elder brother had habits which kept him in poverty, and the property was divided. At this time the clerkship was less valuable than it afterwards became, and in the division the elder took the buildings, leaving the clerkship to the younger, who rented premises for his use. In process of time the elder brother had run through his property, while the younger one was prospering on the proceeds of his office. The fine garments which the family of the younger brother were able to wear excited the envy of the elder one, who resolved to have revenge. A foreign lady, whose house happened to be opposite the dwelling occupied by the younger brother, on

* It is reported in Peking that the present Emperor was not pleased with the choice of a wife which was made for him. He had been so often crossed in his wishes by the Empress Dowager, that any selection which was made by her would have been distasteful. It is also whispered that scenes occurred in the Palace, not remotely unlike those mentioned as taking place at the wedding of one of his subjects. "When those above act, those below will imitate,"

crossing the street one morning, was surprised to see a number of wheelbarrows drawn up before the neighbour's door, and coolies with poles entering the yard. It subsequently appeared that the history of this visit was as follows. A large band of men, natives of a city at some distance, were employed by the elder brother and entered the yard at an early hour, just about the time that the gate would be opened. Without saying a word, the elder brother proceeded to the room occupied by the younger brother, whom they dragged from his bed, perfectly naked, into an outer apartment, where he was severely beaten with clubs, and quick-lime rubbed into his eyes, with a view to reducing him to a state of blindness, so that it would be impossible for him to perform the duties of the clerkship. At the same time, the wife of the elder brother who had accompanied the husband, took the wife of the younger from her bed, beat her with great severity, and also rubbed lime into her eyes. The barrow-men who had been engaged to carry off the household goods of the unfortunate younger brother, had been told that it was a family removal, but on ascertaining that it was a family quarrel, they vanished with great alacrity, to avoid disagreeable legal complications.

In cases of an attack of this sort, it is imperative that the local magistrate should examine the injuries of the person assaulted. Some of the friends of the injured man took him to the yamên. This was about seven o'clock in the morning, but the magistrate was an opium smoker, and like many officials, would do no business until night. Meantime, the injured man, whose eyes appeared to the spectators to be almost destroyed, did not remove any of the lime from his eyes, lest the "proof" of his wrongs should be impaired, a proceeding thoroughly in keeping with Chinese ideas. Having been at last examined by the magistrate, the man was taken to his home about nine o'clock at night, when a foreign physician was called in. He ordered the lime washed out of the eyes, which was then done for the first time. A careful examination of the lime, showed that it must have seen partly slacked in order to pulverize it more readily. To his circumstance the man owed the preservation of his eyes, notwithstanding the ruined condition in which they at first appear to be. It was also found that the lime was mixed with tobacco, to make it more injurious. The eyes of the woman suffered but slightly, but she was so much

injured by her beating, and had screamed so loud and so long, as temporarily to lose her voice. The man was found to be black and blue all over his body, and on one arm deep furrows had been ploughed by the finger nail of one of his assailants. The attacking party, seeing that the barrow-men had deserted them, so as to prevent the removal of the furniture, proceeded as the next best thing to destroy all the belongings of the establishment. Those articles of apparel which were susceptible of easy transportation were done up in bundles and carried off. A case of this sort would not appear to need much time for its judicial settlement, but promptness is far from being a trait of Chinese justice. At the time when the younger brother made his statement to the writer, several months had elapsed, and the case had been heard several times before the district magistrate. The elder brother had been kept in custody for some time, but the other actors had departed to their distant homes. The stolen clothing was not produced, and no one would tell whither it had been taken. After dragging on for several more months, the matter will probably be adjusted by some hollow compromise, and things will go on much as before.

Chinese moral maxims, the common "virtue books" and the "Sacred Edicts" of the Emperors abound in exhortations to "forbearance," a virtue which is rightly affirmed to be superior to that of readiness to forgive. There is a great deal of this latent forbearance among the Chinese, as there has need to be, to preserve society from ruin. The strongest case of which we have heard may serve as a type. A former employé of a wealthy man fell into a rage, vented all his superfluous *ch'i* in the street in front of the house, procured a large knife, and with violent threats stuck it into the outer door of the establishment, at the same time reviling everyone therein in the most outrageous manner. The master of the house was prudent enough to allow this fit of fury to wear itself out, after which the baffled servant went off and got drunk, and during that night died in front of the rich man's door. Under ordinary circumstances this might have been made use of as a most serious handle with which to extort money from the rich man, but under the circumstances, this was out of the question, and the moral was plain to all—forbearance is a virtue sure to be rewarded.

We have just remarked that in Chinese life, anything whatever may serve as the cause of a quarrel, or in the apt metaphorical expression of the people, there is no dipper that does not at times strike the edge of the cooking-boiler. The writer once happened to see in a neighbouring village an abandoned vineyard, and the idea occurred that as these vines were wholly neglected and useless, they might be bought at a cheap rate, and transferred to a situation where they would be more appreciated. A native of the village who was in the writer's employ, who had a turn for intricate diplomacy, was instructed to open up negotiations. This he accomplished with skill, and in due time the vines were delivered. But no transaction of this sort is finished in China, until one has seen the end of it, and no one can ever tell when that will be. The field turned out to be the property of several brothers with one of whom the bargain had been made. One of the other brothers, soon made the discovery that it was a species of sacrilege to part with grape-vines which had been originally planted by a now deceased grandfather. Each of the brothers, who had not been principals, took the same view of the matter the truth being that in the division of the spoils, they had been insufficiently considered. The only way to adjust the matter was for the agent who made the original proposal, to procure additional funds, which he divided among the various brothers, giving to each his share privately and as if it were the only one!

In cases of this sort, the middleman occupies a position which cannot be enviable. He will not infrequently be reviled, simply for not helping on a bargain in which there was to have been the most outrageous fraud. This is especially likely to be the case where foreigners are concerned, for it is then that the heaviest profits are expected. Foreigners themselves are often reviled behind their backs, especially if they do not speak Chinese, because they have not spent as much money as the cupidity of inn-keepers and others had led them to expect. In such cases, the servants of the foreigner have to bear the brunt of the abuse. To a Chinese it seems unaccountable that foreigners take it so coolly when informed that they have been reviled. "What of it?" is the natural reply for an Anglo-Saxon. "I can stand it if he can?" But to a Chinese the man who is reviled and who feels no pain, is a kind of monstrosity, lost to self-respect. Foreign

indifference to such abuse is generally laid to gross incapacity and hopeless stupidity, and the foreigner's unwillingness to have a tempestous row over every trifle, is set down to his utter ignorance of "propriety!"

How easy it is for the poor foreigner both to misunderstand and to be misunderstood, it well illustrated in the experience of a friend of the writer, who visited a Chinese bank with the proprietors of which he was on good terms, and in the neighbourhood of which there had recently been a destructive conflagration. The foreigner congratulated the banker that the fire had not come any nearer to his establishment. On this the person addressed grew at once embarrassed and then angry, exclaiming, "What sort of talk is this? This is not a proper kind of talk!" It was not till some time afterwards, that the discovery was made, that the point of the offence against good manners, lay in the implied hint that if the fire had come too near, it might have burned the cash-shop, which would have been most unlucky, and the very contemplation of which, albeit in congratulatory language, was therefore taboo!

Whenever social storms prove incapable of adjustment by the ordinary processes, in other words when there is such a preponderance of *ch'i* that it cannot be dispersed without an explosion, there is the beginning of the law-suit, a term in China of fateful significance. The same blind rage which leads a person to lose all control of himself in a quarrel, leads him after the first stages of the outbreak have passed, to determine to take the offender before a magistrate, in order "to have the law on him." This proceeding in Western lands is generally injudicious, but in China it is sheer madness. There is sound sense in the proverb which praises the man who will suffer himself to be imposed upon to the death, before he will go to the law, which will often be worse than death. We smile at the fury of the immigrant whose dog had been shot by a neighbour, and who was remonstrated with by a friend when the resolution to go to law was declared. "What was the value of the dog?" "Ze dog vas vort nottings, but since he vas so mean as to kill him, he shall pay ze full value of him." In an Occidental land such a suit would be dismissed with costs, and there it would end. But in China, it might go on to the ruin of both parties, and be a cause of feud for generations yet to come.

The "Sacret Edicts" contain a great deal of wise advice about the folly of going to law over trifles, wasting time, money and strength, and engendering enmities, but good advice is one of the commodities of which the Chinese are never destitute, and which has very little effect on actual life. We have known a dispute between a rustic customer and a pawnshop, as to a few bad cash, the total value of which did not amount to five cents, to be followed by a reviling match, a fight, an organized attack on the pawnshop by a band of villagers, the despatch of troops by the district magistrate to restore order, the interruption of the business of the shop for half a month, and a ruinous law-suit in which the rustic was of course defeated, severely punished for his fatuous attempt to get his rights, and for indulging his *ch'i* at the expense of a powerful corporation.

In another instance a trifling dispute between some children about the right to a few dates, led to a fight and a law-suit which dragged on its destructive way, until one of the witnesses died in the yamên, resulting in fresh suits and ultimate ruin to all parties. In another case, a chance word from one woman to another on the dirty appearance of a child which one of them was carrying, was sufficient to serve as a slow-match for a great explosion which came near terminating as fatally as the last case, but which was adjusted in one of its apparently hopeless stages, by some of the mysterious means for which the Chinese display such talent. These examples are constantly duplicated in every day life, as the reader may easily satisfy himself by a little enquiry. It is only by attentive consideration of these phenomena that one comes to appreciate the significance of the familiar mottoes so often to be seen over door-ways, "Harmony is precious," "Peace and tranquility are worth thousands of gold."

An officer on a British man-of-war once mentioned to the writer that he had been subjected to sundry annoyances through the petty spite of a commanding officer, who obliged him to sleep on a dining table, on account of there being no available cabin or berth. To an enquiry as to the length to which a superior would be able to carry such persecutions, the officer replied comprehensively, "Well, a nasty man can make it nasty for you anywhere!" In endeavouring to study the complex details of Chinese life, we have often been reminded of the observation of this British subject.

The constitution of Chinese society is such as to put great advantages within the reach of one whom the classical English authors used to call a "bold bad man." This is a compendious description of the Chinese bully, a character of capital importance in China, without an acquaintance with whom it is impossible to comprehend the workings of Chinese social life. The Chinese bully is found in the city and in the country. He is sometimes rich, and at other times he is poor. Sometimes he cannot read, and sometimes he is a graduate of one or more degrees. Sometimes, strange to say, "he" is a woman! But in all cases he unites certain essential qualities in more or less complete proportions, and according to the extent to which these qualities are developed, will be his success as a "bully." He must have a capacity to manage business and to deal with people, and must be possessed of the instinct of general meddling so as to make himself felt in the region over which he domineers. "The bean-curd bully," says one of the enigmatical sayings of the Chinese, "rules a square territory, and the carrying-pole bully rules a strip." The cakes of bean-curd are square, while the carrying-pole is long, and these objects are intended to represent by their shapes the representative areas dominated by bullies of varying conditions. The bullies of certain cities enjoy a national reputation, are dreaded all over the Empire. Thus it is said that in certain parts of China, there are notices posted over the doors of inns, "No Tientsin men admitted." The blacklegs of that port are notorious for their violence, and are even called by a peculiar nickname *(hun-hsing-tze)*. It was by their means that the Tientsin massacre was carried through, and such men are everywhere the leaders of the dangerous classes.

Extended experience in many provinces has shown how easy it is to stir these elements into a blaze at any time, and on any pretext, especially in any matter relating to foreigners. It is largely due to them that the foreigner in China, or in any part of it, literally never knows what a day or a night may bring forth. In view of their possible combination, aided by some trifling circumstance, every day to the foreigner in China is liable to be a kind of crisis. It was to this that Dr. Williams referred, when he once compared a stay in China to life in a stage-coach; one never knows at what moment it may upset. It is a part of the outfit of the fully equipped bully, that he is extremely intimate with the bad

characters who do the work of the yamêns. He can prosecute a law-suit with little or no expense, because it is to him that the yamên runners owe their living, that is, the persons who are obliged to go to law and whom the yamên people fleece in the process, are brought to this extremity largely through the help of the bullies who get up rows, or take charge of them after they have been got up by others.

To a bully of this special type, a row of some sort is the normal condition of life. When there is no occupation of the sort on hand, he is "spoiling for a fight." In the metaphorical saying of the Chimese, such a person, if he has been three days without a quarrel, is obliged to revile the kitchen god, by way of keeping himself in practice! If he is accomplished in his art, he is able to endure any amount of bambooing with comparative indifference, never betraying any sign of pain, or his prestige would be gone. Once having risen superior to the ordinary trammels of the flesh, the bully is assured of a lucrative practice in the brawls of others. If he is beaten by the magistrate, who is very likely to have the utmost antipathy to such a class of the community, he takes it as a matter of course, and this is called "supporting one's upper half, at the expense of one's lower half." Sometimes these bullies provoke the magistrate in the spirit of mere bravado, perhaps even reviling him in open court. The city black-leg, or "bare-stick" as he is significantly called, is matched by his country cousin, who, if less versatile, is equally adapted to the conditions under which he has his being. If he is a scholar, he has some peculiar advantages from that circumstance; while if he is a poor man, always with something to gain and never with anything to lose, he has a coign of vantage from which it is hard to dislodge him. In either case, he is able to exert an influence on the affairs of his native village which is decisive.

The city of New York has long enjoyed the distinction of being the worst governed municipality in the world. But the chief principles which characterized the misgovernment of New York under the rule of the Tweed ring are perfectly well understood in China, and are practiced with a degree of success which even democracy cannot rival. It is not every Chinese village which is controlled by this one man power, but such cases are very common, and one such happens to be the hamlet selected by Providence

for the residence of the present writer. For some years we have enjoyed an opportunity quite unsurpassed, to study the means by which village "bare-sticks" obtain and retain their power. Their qualifications already described being assumed, it remains for them to indicate the lines along which contemporaneous history is to move, with a liberal admixture of threats as to consequences if these hints are not acted upon by history. If this should fail to secure prompt compliance, mysterious fires will break out at dead of night, destroying in an hour fuel sufficient for a whole winter's use, and which cannot be replaced. No one is ever caught setting these fires. By the time several of them have taken place, it has become sufficiently evident who are the ones whom the fire-god does not favour.

A Chinese fire, so far as we have had observation of them, is a spectacle at once pathetic and ludicrous. There is always a perfect mob of spectators, but very few who do anything towards the extinction of the flames, and the amount of yelling volunteered, is to the amount of water, as ten thousand to one. In fact a village fire is frequently put out without any water at all, or any to speak of, being simply buried under a quantity of earth which is thrown upon it, for dirt is unfavourable to combustion, and has the great advantage over water of being always at hand in sufficient abundance. But in the case of a village fire when the agency of the village bully is suspected, it is by no means certain that there will be even an attempt to put it out, lest those who are most active should be the next victims.

Every village has many matters of common interest, such as the building of temples, the construction and repair of embankments, the watching of the crops by concerted action, furnishing transportation to the local official in response to his demands, and the like. Many of these matters involve the handling of considerable sums of money, and the village bully knows perfectly well how to do all these things, and is certain to be *ex officio* a member of the group of "headmen" by whom such affairs are put through.

An example of his mode of procedure is afforded by the village to which reference has just been made. For a whole generation no theatrical performance had taken place in this village. This was because on the occasion when such an event

occurred, one family in the village had advanced money which had never been repaid, and whenever it had been proposed to hire a band of players this family has always insisted that their stale debt must first be repaid, a proposition which invariably quashed all further proceedings. But in the year 1888, the local bully, perhaps feeling in need of assistance for his exchequer, which was chronically low, renewed the proposition for theatricals, and with such persuasion that no one dared refuse. The family who had the sum owing to them did not decline to co-operate, but succeeded in setting off their old debt against the present assessment upon them. The performance took place, and the total expense to a village of a little more than a hundred families must have amounted to between four and five hundred Mexican dollars, the greater part of this being wasted in entertaining the hordes of relatives and acquaintances who are attracted to any village which has a theatre in operation, as buzzards to a deceased mule.

A year later, when grain was at a higher price than at any time since the great famine of eleven years previous, the proposition for a theatrical representation was renewed. To the sober sense of the practical Chinese, the mere suggestion was fatuous. What possible reason could there be for the expenditure of double the ordinary amount for entertainment, when by autumn, grain would have fallen to its normal rate? Yet such was the cogency of the arguments advanced, that the proposition met with no serious opposition, and was carried into effect. The reason popularly assigned for the theatre on this occasion was that it was designed to celebrate the *harmony of feeling* of the whole village, every family in which was now sincerely desirous of co-operating! During the four days of the performance, the village bully, by whose autocratic word all this bustle had sprung up, set at the receipt of customs, keeping account of the amounts handed in. It was remarked as a pleasing test of the unanimity of feeling in the village, that no one had to be asked for his tax, "a most unusual phenemenon," but everyone brought it and laid it at the feet of the bully with joyful willingness!

It is well-known that there are some species of wolves which hunt in enormous packs. If a hard pressed traveller should shoot one of them so that he is disabled, the rest of the pack, or a part

of it, will suspend their pursuit for a few moments, while they devour their companion. That there should be any phenomena at all similar to this among so peaceable and amicable a people as the Chinese, does not at first appear probable or even credible. But it often happens that a single fact, seen in all its relations, is sufficient to explain a great variety of other facts. The Chinese bully in his various forms of manifestation is responsible for many of the evils of Chinese society, in a manner which it is by no means difficult to understand. The national dread of giving offence has been already described. Once postulating a man of the type here represented, furnished with occasions for a quarrel, there is no force in Chinese society which is adequate to deal with him. Public sentiment is indeed against him, but what does he care for sentiment? It is a phrase which is in constant use in regard to such a person, that he is one whom we "dare not provoke." Having nothing to lose himself, he is on general principles in favour of anything which promises a disturbance of the existing order of things. Without being aware of it, he is an Anarchist and a Nihilist in one. It is from this class, never small, that infant rebellions gather their momentum, until, like the T'ai-p'ings, they roll a slow spreading wave of ruin all over the Empire. The least opening is sufficient for the entrance of mischief in irresistible forms.

In a village near to the writer's home, a child who was playing in a temple happened to jostle one of the gods, so that one of the clay fingers fell off. The natural thing to do, if anything was to be done at all, was to require the child's father to put the image in the same condition as before. But this did not suit the local bully who managed the affair, and the result was a row of grand proportions, and a fine in money which was itself a grievous burden, and a feast of "harmony" for all concerned. Disturbances of this sort are constantly happening everywhere, being too common to attract any notice, but they attain their maximum when the occasion is the death of some one, under such conditions that they can be made use of for the purpose of extortion. This is the form in which the Chinese respect for human life most conspicuously asserts itself. It is a proverb of deep meaning, that while a man is alive he is as insignificant as a mere blade of grass, but if he is killed he becomes to his

family a mine of wealth. To such a pitch is a matter of adjustment of such cases carried, albeit wholly contrary to law, that it often seems that one might take his stand on the most crowded thoroughfare, shoot the first man whom he happened to meet and yet be reasonably secure of settling the matter by a payment of money. It is eminently true of China, that earth has no sorrows that cash cannot heal.

There are two classes in a Chinese community who are subject to oppression, the poor and the rich. The former suffer from conditions which differ widely from those in some other countries, such as Turkey, in the important particular that it is not the government which oppresses them. The land-tax is very moderate, and with rare exceptions, the officials do not appear to make any demands upon the mass of the people.

In China most especially, the misery of the poor is their poverty, and the hopelessness of their condition is due to their inability to lift themselves out of it by their own shoe-straps. And if they cannot do it themselves, it will not be done at all, so that the great mass of those who are poor must remain so. Yet there are enough exceptions to explain the process by which great wealth is dissipated, as the proverb says, in three generations; but these exceptions form no considerable proportion of the whole number of cases. As a rule, the poor man in China has no chance to better himself. Those who have wealth, especially if they have gained it themselves, are oftener than not deeply marked by the struggles through which they have passed. The world has shown them no favours, and there is no perceptible reason why they should show any favours to the world, while there are very cogent and convincing reasons why they should not do so.

That figure of speech which likens the permanent moral improvement of the rich man to the progress of a camel through the eye of a needle, when Chinese life is attentively considered turns out to be a sober and mathematically accurate statement. Within three miles of the writer's house lives a wealthy Chinese, who has a pawn-shop and between two and three thousand Chinese acres of land. Yet in the famine year, he not only did nothing for the poor of the district out of which he has made his money, but even the hamlet composed of the hovels of those who work his own land contained starving families who were relieved by

foreign money, in default of which the poor people must have died. In a region where about ten thousand dollars were distributed from foreign sources in aid of the victims of famine, scarcely an instance was heard of in which the local rich families took any part in alleviating the distress, which was such that it was estimated that on an average one person in every family died either of starvation or of disease. Under these circumstances, it is not strange if the employés of these wealthy families maintain toward them an attitude of secret hostility, seizing every opportunity to do them an injury, when it cannot be traced. A pawn-shop, situated in a village near to the writer's residence, had a wall which was built on the outer edge of the land owned by the firm. On one occasion it became necessary to repair this wall, which could only be done by placing a staging on the land outside, for the use of the masons. The owners of this land refused to allow it to be used for this purpose, and as the pawn-shop, which is the hereditary enemy of the poor, was for once in their power, the managers were compelled to pay a squeeze of about *three hundred Mexican dollars* for the right to use for a few days a bit of ground, the market value of which was perhaps two dollars.

It is one of the concomitants of the social solidarity of the Chinese, that any man who has become rich is exposed to the devastating levies of all his relatives, of whom there are invariably an immense horde, and also of his "friends," who are in danger of proving to be as numerous and as needy as his relatives. The most conspicuous examples of this state of things occur in the southern districts of China, from which the emigration of Chinese to foreign countries chiefly takes place. Each returning emigrant is already weighed in the social balances, and the assessments are soon fixed. By the time he has been plucked for the benefit of relatives and "friends," and taxed for the repair of temples, the spirit is so far gone out of him that his main anxiety is to get some friend to "lend" him a sum sufficient to get back to the foreign land where he came, in order to begin the process of accumulation all over again.

If a man who has land is unable to till the whole of it himself, his remotest cousins feel authorized to complain, if the work is given to some one else. "One family warm and well fed,"

says the popular adage, "is the envy of ten others." The writer is acquainted with an elderly man, who has a well-to-do neighbour with whom he was formerly associated in one of the secret sects so common in China. On asking him about this neighbour, whose house was at a little distance from his own, it turned out that the two men who had grown up together, and had passed more than sixty years in proximity, never met. "And why was this?" "Because the other man is getting old, and does not go out much." "Why, then, do you not sometimes go to see him, and talk over old times. Are you not on good terms?" The person addressed smiled the smile of conscious superiority, and shook his head. "Yes," he said, "we are on good terms enough, but he is well off, and I am poor, and if I were to go there it would make talk. Folks would say, *What is he coming here for?*"

One of the most difficult tasks is to convey a truthful idea of Chinese benevolence. In the chapter which has already been devoted to this topic, we have come very far short of our own ideal. One's first impression is that there is no benevolence in China. This error is afterwards corrected, and it is perceived that such as it is, there is a great deal of benevolence. But on closer examination, it turns out to be what the tradesmen called Irish poplin, "half-stuff." Still, occasional cases render us disinclined to deny its existence, and thus our minds are left in what Macaulay termed "an uneasy and interminable state of abeyance." We know that there is truth; but we cannot decide exactly where it lies. Among a people of so mild a disposition as the Chinese, there must be a great deal of domestic kindness of which nothing is seen or heard. Sickness and trouble are peculiarly adapted to call out the best side of human nature, and in a foreign hospital for Chinese we have witnessed many instances of devotion not merely on the part of parents toward children, or children toward parents, but of wives toward husbands and also of husbands toward wives. The same thing is even more common among strangers toward each other. Many a Chinese mother nursing an infant, will give of her over-flowing abundance to a motherless child which else might starve.

A case, recently reported to the writer by eye-witnesses, illustrates a different phase of Chinese life. A Chinese woman

was going from one city to another distant about twelve miles, and was riding a donkey. In crossing a puddle the animal slipped and fell, throwing the woman to the ground against a stone, and giving her very severe bruises in the breast and back. Seeing her lie in this helpless condition, moaning with extreme pain, the donkey boy took his beast and made off. This happened at about seven o'clock in the morning. Although this was alongside of one of the most travelled highways in China leading to the capital, the woman was allowed to lie there all day, except that some one moved her a little out of the fiercest glare of the summer sun. The only person who offered to do anything for her was a man who proposed to take her to her home, two or three miles distant, for a sum equal to about five dollars, a proposition which the woman even in her extreme pain, was still too sensible to think for a moment of accepting. About twelve hours after the accident took place, the owner of the donkey, fearing that he would be held responsible if the woman was killed, returned to the spot, hoping that she had disappeared. Finding her still there, a small flat basket was procured, into which she was tumbled, curled up like a pig, and carried by a pole on the shoulders of two men into the city near by, exhausted, and half dead with pain and fright. The woman insisted upon being taken to the house of the foreigner, declaring that she should die if she went to her own home, a premonition which had much probability. The suffering woman was taken into the dispensary, and carefully attended, while her husdand was sent for. On his arrival, he abused his wife for her stupidity in falling from the donkey! After several weeks of assiduous nursing, the woman recovered.

The following instance, cited by Mr. Baber from the narrative of a Roman Catholic priest who had escaped almost naked and after great tribulations from the barbarous Mau-tzu, and who with difficulty succeeded in entering a Chinese village, gives both sides of the picture. "I had great trouble in finding a lodging; nobody would take me in, because I had no money. I remember that I went from door to door saying the handsomest things in the most doleful tones, without any success. Some, while leaving me in the streets, would recommend me to be patient, remarking that times were bad, and that moreover, I was not the only unfortunate, with other truths of a similar nature. These were

the most civil. Others would flatly declare that I was a thief, and that their homes were not meant for people like me. I saw the moment coming for me, not to sleep but to die, in the streets of that inhospitable village. My entreaties and my courage were alike exhausted, when I heard some one calling me. "Old fellow! old fellow! come here!" It turned out to be one of those who had refused me shelter. The good man gave me supper, and performed that night an act of charity which to those who know what the heathen are, will seem incredible. There was only one blanket in his house, the other being hidden in the mountain for fear of the robbers. Well, my host had kept this solitary blanket for his own use, and yet he lent it to me for the night without being asked, sleeping himself in his clothes on a bench beside a small fire which he relighted more than once without succeeding in getting warm. I am firmly persuaded that the Lord, in His mercy, will give that heathen the faith, of which he already has the works, and I earnestly recommend his conversion, as well as that of his family to your good prayers."

We have heard of one instance in which a foreign family, moving into an interior city of China, was welcomed with apparent cordiality by the people, the neighbours even volunteering to lend them articles for house-keeping until such time as they might be able to procure an outfit of their own. Other examples there doubtless are, but it is well known that these are wholly exceptional. By far the most usual reception is total indifference on the part of the people, except so far as curiosity is excited to see what the new comers are like; a spirit of cupidity to make the most of the "fat geese" whom fate has sent thither to be plucked; and sullen hostility. In the case of foreigners who may have been reduced to distress, we have never heard of any assistance voluntarily given by Chinese, though of course there may have been such cases. We have read of instances in which sailors have attempted the journey overland from Tientsin to Chefoo, and from Chefoo to Swatow, and during the whole time of their travel they never once succeeded in getting a lodging or a mouthful of food.

We have referred to the common neglect of sickness in the family, because the victims are "only women and children." Small-pox, which in Western lands we regard as a terrible scourge, is so constant a visitor in China that the people never expect to

be free from its ravages. But it is not much thought of, because its victims are mainly children! It is exceedingly common to meet with persons who have lost the sight of both eyes in consequence of this disease. The comparative disregard of the value of infant life is displayed in ways which we should by no means have expected from the Chinese, who object so strongly to the mutilation of the human body. Young children are often either not buried at all, an ordinary expression for their death being the phrase "thrown out," or if rolled in a mat, they are so loosely covered that they soon fall a prey to dogs. In some places the horrible custom prevails of crushing the body of a deceased infant into an indistinguishable mass, in order to prevent the "devil" which inhabited it from returning to vex the family!

While the Chinese are so indifferent to small-pox, the foreign fear of which they fail to appreciate, they have a similar dread of typhus and typhoid fevers, which are regarded much as we regard the scarlet fever. It is very difficult to get proper attention, or any attention at all, if one happens to be taken with either of these diseases when away from home. To all appeals for help, it is a conclusive reply, "that disease is contagious." While this is true to some extent of many fevers, it is perhaps most conspicuous in a terrible scourge found in some of the valleys of Yunnan, and described by Mr. Baber. "The sufferer is soon seized with extreme weakness, followed in a few hours by agonizing aches in every part of the body; delirium shortly ensues, and in nine cases out of ten the result is fatal." According to the native accounts, "all parts of the sick-room are occupied by devils; even the tables and mattresses writhe about and utter voices, and offer intelligible replies to all who question them. Few, however, venture into the chamber. The missionary assured me that the patient is, in most cases, deserted like a leper, for fear of contagion. If an elder member of the family is attacked, the best attention he receives is to be placed in a solitary room with a vessel of water by his side. The door is secured, and a pole laid near it, with which twice a day the anxious relatives, cautiously peering in, poke and prod the sick person, to discover if he retains any symptoms of life."

A young lady in America, who lived near a line of railway on which there was a particularly steep and difficult grade, remarked that she never heard the long freight trains toil by, drawn by a

panting and puffing engine, without feeling an impulse to go out and give them a *vigorous push from behind.* It is this kind of an impulse with characterizes to so large an extent Western civilization as we see it in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. These impulses doubtless exist on the part of a few individuals in China. According to the "virtue books" of some of the sects, there is a great variety of acts by which human beings may accumulate merit. While the collection of stray human bones, the gathering of paper on which characters have been written, the purchase of birds and fish that they may be restored to their native element, occupy a very prominent place in such schemes, acts of kindly goodwill to men and women, so far as our observation goes, generally occupy a very subordinate place. When these acts take place, they are almost sure to be on some stereotyped pattern, involving a minimum of trouble and thought on the part of the doer. It is much easier to stand by the brink of a river, watch a fisherman lower his net, pay for his entire catch, and throw it back into the water, than to look into the case of the needy at one's doors, and give help in a judicious manner. Moreover, to the mind of the practical Chinese there is a very important difference. As soon as the fish touches the water, or the bird skims the air, they are on a wholly self-supporting basis, and that is the end of the work. They will not expect the man who has released them to provide them and their numerous and needy families with means of support. For the man it only remains to register his virtuous act, and go about his business sure of no disagreeable consequences.

But in China, "Virtue's door is hard to open," and it is still harder to shut. No one can possibly foresee all the remote results of some well-meant act of kindness, and knowing the danger of incurring responsibility, the prudent will be wary what they undertake. A missionary living in an interior province was asked by some native gentlemen to do a kind act for a poor beggar who was totally blind, and restore to him his sight. It proved to be a case of cataract and excellent vision was secured. When this result became certain, the missionary was waited upon by the same gentlemen, and told that as he had destroyed the only means by which the blind man could get a living, that is by begging, it was the duty of the missionary to make it up to him by taking him into employ as a gate-keeper! Sometimes a benevolent old lady,

who is limited in the sphere of her activity, makes a practice of entertaining other old ladies who seem to be deserving, but who are victims of cruel fate. We have heard of one case of this sort—and of one only—and they may not be so rare as is supposed. But after all abatements, it must be admitted that "real kindness kindly expressed" is not often to be met in Chinese life. The ordinary streams of refugees which swarm over the country in a bad year are indeed allowed to camp down in cart-sheds, empty rooms, etc., but this is to a considerable extent a necessity. When such refugees come in extensive bands, and meet with repulses in all quarters, they are certain to be provoked into some form of reprisal. Common prudence dictates some concessions to those in such circumstances.

In a Western country a perfect stranger travelling on foot is not unlikely to be invited to ride on a passing waggon, if there is room. But one might travel tens of thousands of miles in China, and never hear of such a proposition. We have heard indeed of an instance in which a kind-hearted foreigner attempted to introduce this Occidental exotic to Chinese soil. A poor Chinese woman who was toiling along the highway was invited to ride on a foreigner's cart, which was halted for her convenience. As soon as the old woman was made to comprehend the nature of his proposition, she fell into a passion, lying down in the road, rolling over and over in her fury, reviling her would-be benefactor with fearful shrieks!

It is in travelling in China that the absence of helpful kindness on the part of the people toward strangers is most conspicuous. When the summer rains have made all land travel almost impossible, he whose circumstances make travel a necessity will find that "heaven, earth and man" are a three-fold harmony in combination against him. No one will tell him that the road which he has taken will presently end in a quagmire. If on his return he asks the people working in the fields why they did not tell him that this was the wrong road, their answer is suggestive of that of the inebriated individual who was criticised by the by-standers for getting on his horse with his face to its tail, to whom he replied with withering scorn and drunken dignity, "How do you know which way I want to go?" If you choose to drive into a morass, it is no business of the contiguous tax-payers. We have heretofore

spoken in various connections of the neglect of Chinese highways. When the traveller has been plunged into one of the sloughs with which all such roads at certain seasons abound, and finds it impossible to extricate himself, a great crowd of persons will rapidly gather from somewhere, "their hands in their sleeves, and idly gazing," as the saying goes. It is not until a definite bargain has been made with them that any one of these by-standers, no matter how numerous, will lift a finger to help one in any particular. Not only so, but it is a constant practice on such occasions for the local rustics to dig deep pits in difficult places, with the express purpose of trapping the traveller that he may be obliged to employ these same rustics to help the travellers out! When there is any doubt as to the road in such places, one might as well plunge forward disregarding the cautions of those native to the spot, since one can never be sure that the directions given are not designed to hinder rather than help.

Chinese ferry boats are unprovided with any proper gangway planks, but are furnished with a miserable assortment of narrow and crooked boards, over which it is next to impossible for an animal to walk. The philosopher who was told that his straitened apartments did not seem large enough to "swing a cat in," aptly replied that he did not wish to "swing a cat." The ferry-man is not open to criticism for not having planks over which mules and donkeys will walk, for he does not wish them to do so. What he does wish, and will most surely achieve, is that whoever has occasion to take animals over the river shall be obliged to hire some of the idlers who are always at hand in such places to help him get his live-stock aboard the venerable ark which does duty as a ferry-boat. The so-called "Grand Canal" is at present largely disused from the lack of water, and is crossed on bridges of boats. But as this simple means of transit would abolish the profits arising from narrow and crooked planks leading to a ferry, a happy compromise has been adopted, by which the rotten old planks are so disarranged as to lead to the boats, and offer almost as much obstruction as those of a ferry, requiring the unharnessing of the whole team and the labour of several men to do what ought not to need doing at all. Sometimes ferry-men will conduct the traveller to an island in the middle of a river, and refuse to take him any further, unless the rest of the channel is considered as a

new and distinct river, for which an additional price is to be paid. If the river is to be crossed by fording, there are always vagrants in the vicinity who insist upon being employed to lead the animals across. However shallow the stream may be, it is more necessary to secure their services than at first sight appears, for it often happens that they warn you of holes the extistence of which no one would suspect, and which have been *purposely dug by themselves* to break the legs of the animals of such travellers are refuse to submit to the demands of these guides.

One is constantly surprised, until habit has accustomed him to the sight, at the calm indifference with which a calamity or even the entire ruin of another is regarded by the Chinese. Ruin is too common a phenomenon to attract much attention. The ordinary attitude of a Chinese toward such a case seems to be that of Mr. Wilfer, who had so many daughters that he appeared to be always saying to himself when he met them, "Oh, ah, here comes another one of them!" It is a literal truth in China, that "when a man is rolling down hill, everything seems to be greased for the occasion." The general omission to do anything for the relief of the drowning, which at once strikes the foreigner in China, is matched by a like callousness to the many cases of distress which are to be seen almost everywhere, especially along lines of travel. It is a common proverb that to be poor at home is not to be counted as poverty, but to be poor when on the high road, away from home, will cost a man his life.

The unwillingness to give help to others, unless there is some special reason for doing so, is a trait that runs through Chinese social relations, in multifold manifestations. It is a common and in many cases a perfectly valid excuse which is made when a bright boy is advised to try to learn to read a little, although he has no opportunity to go to school, that no one will tell him the characters, although there may be plenty of reading men within reach who have abundant leisure. The very mention of such an ambition is certain to excite unmeasured ridicule on the part of those who have had the longest experience of Chinese schools, as if they were saying, "By what right does this fellow think to take a short cut, and pick up in a few months what cost us years of toil, and then was forgotten in half the time which we took to get it? Let him hire a teacher for himself as we did." It is very rare indeed

to meet with a genuine case of one who has anything which can be called a knowledge of characters, even of the most elementary description, which he has "picked up" for himself, though such cases do occasionally occur.

It is a striking comment on the irrational Chinese method of education which makes the production of literary essays the be-all and the end-all of study; that in the very region in which Confucius and Mencius lived, taught, and died, one may find school-teachers who have studied only the Four Books, and those only in the most perfunctory manner, and have never even looked into the Books of Poetry, History, or Changes! This amazing fact is only paralleled by the yet more common one, to which we have already adverted, but to which it is impossible to do full justice, that it is exceedingly common to find men who have spent more years in study than they can remember, who yet cannot read the simplest colloquial book, nor repeat a page of what they have studied. A few months ago the writer met a man in a dispensary, who seemed to be examining his tallycard with a minute attention which indicated that he recognized the characters. The latter were few and simple, merely indicating his surname and number, "Wang, number 236." One being asked if he knew the characters by sight, he replied that he recognized "*about half of them.*" "And have you studied at a school?" "Oh, yes." "How many years have you studied?" "*Twelve years.*"

One is often struck in China with the readiness of resource of even the most ordinary coolie. If he is interested in having a thing done, even though there be no "way" *(fa-tzu)*, he will find one, for nowhere do the way and the will more firmly cement their partnership than in the Celestial Empire. But if the matter is nothing to them, though there may be a whole village full of people brimful of resources, not one of them will lift a finger to assist, unless he sees definitely what is to be got by it. It is obstructions of this sort which give point to the adage, that "out of every ten matters nine will go wrong."

Repeated references have been made to Chinese views on the subject of hospitality. This cannot be said to be a distinctively Chinese virtue, although there is so much intercommunication between friends. It is a dictum, as old as the ancient classics, that reciprocity involves giving and taking, and that in default of

either, it is not real "reciprocity." In strict accordance with this rule, reciprocity in China is proverbially an exact science. "You give me an ox, and I must give you a horse in return. You honour me a foot, and I will honour you ten feet," (the account being still an open one at that point.) "One box comes, but another box must go in return." In cases of weddings and funerals, when, as we have seen, help is required from all directions, the practical instincts of the Chinese have led to a most accurate system of social book-keeping, by which it is always possible for each host to know who contributed to the wedding or the funeral, and *how much.* When a wedding or a funeral occurs in that family, the contribution which the present host makes on that occasion will be strictly gauged by the past. The proposition that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, is nowhere more exactly true than in regard to one's social debts in China.

In the struggle for existence, which comprises so large a part of the phenomena of Chinese life, social solidarity has much part. A man who is a member of a large family is in much less danger of losing his rights than a man who belongs to an insignificant family. The general principle is doubtless true of all lands and of all times, but it has special applications in China. A large village, all the families of which belong to the same clan, having the same ancestral hall and the same grave-yard, is evidently more than a match for a village which is inferior in numbers, and the members of which are of various surnames, and are united by no other tie than that of contiguity of abode. There are many matters in which the interests of villages as such, in distinction from those of the separate families of the village, may come into collision.

Prominent among these sources of dispute are those which arise from the danger of flowing, or more frequently of overflowing water. One village or set of villages is situated on a flat, liable to inundation when a river breaks its banks. To guard against the ruin which is thus threatened, a group of villages, perhaps with the knowledge and consent of the local magistrate for the time being, provides a bank which shall prevent the waters from overwhelming any of these villages. But water must go somewhere, and in a thickly settled country such as a great part of China is, it cannot go anywhere without ruin to many people. When such a bank has been newly built or repaired, and a break in the river

is expected, large volunteer details from the villages interested in keeping the water out watch the bank to see that it is not disturbed. The villagers living within the area which will be flooded by the dreaded waters sally out by night and attempt to cut the bank, if possible in such a way as to make it appear that it was done by the action of the waters. It is when hostile parties meet under these conditions that the most sanguinary battles take place.

To appeal to the magistrates in the first instance is recognized as useless, because no magistrate will do anything in the matter if he can avoid it, and even if he were willing, the rate of his movements would be such that the danger would have either passed or have been precipitated before the initial steps of the mandarin had been taken. As the very existence of the people is thus often at stake, the battles are sometimes of great ferocity, and many lives are lost. This leads to law-suits, which are not infrequently hushed up by the officials, that they may not lose their posts. It is for this reason that often no reference to these occurrences appears in the *Peking Gazette*. When we consider the extent of territory in China which is at times liable to such devastation as we have described, the magnitude of the evil may be faintly apprehended.*

The cases here referred to, are those of extraordinary banks, provided by the people, in distinction from the regular ones which

* During the almost unprecedented floods in North-China, in the summer of 1890, the phenomena here described were witnessed on a great scale. A stream called the T'u-hai runs parallel with the course of the Yellow River on the north side, and is guarded by a lofty dyke. As additional protection to the districts north of the T'u-hai, smaller banks had been thrown up, to confine the waters to the south, in case the floods of previous years should be repeated. These banks, to the number of five or six, extended at intervals like the bars of a gridiron. When the great dyke of the T'u-hai actually broke, the inhabitants of the strip first inundated, finding their crops ruined, and their houses tumbling over them, raised a large force, and attempted to cut the bank to the north of them, in order to let out the water. This the villagers on the other side resisted with a still larger force, and the result was a battle. When the bank was at length broken down, the villagers in the second strip in their turn raised a posse and attacked the bank to the north of them, which was vigorously defended by the people whom it protected. By the time the water had reached its height, all of these several banks were in ruins, and the whole country was one vast lake. In the battles which had taken place, countless lives had been lost, the district magistrates doing absolutely nothing by way of prevention. Instances of this sort were reported all over the wide area of inundation, and fierce feuds were engendered, the bitter fruits of which will continue to appear for generations to come.

are found along water-courses which flow through the plains. In the season when an inundation from any of the rivers is threatened, the river banks are lined by an excited throng of villagers, representing the region liable to inundation. There is less danger of fights than in the circumstances already described, as the interests of all those engaged are substantially the same; but there are various characteristic phenomena, which serve as illustrations of our subject. Upon such occasions, the imminent public peril is supposed to swallow up all private considerations, and the "triumphant democracy," of which in China there is a great deal, rages almost unchecked. Large bodies of excited peasants, most of them threatened with the total ruin of all their standing crops, however law-abiding they may ordinarily be, are not at such times easily controlled. They make their appearances in the villages which are nearest to the river bank, and under pretence of stopping an opening chasm in the river-bank, seize on whatever they happen to see, and take whatever they demand. In a case reported to the writer on a recent occasion, a band of this sort confiscated the entire furniture of a drug-shop,—counters, expensive chests of drawers, etc., to throw into a hole in the river-bank, apparently out of a spirit of mere wanton mischief. A few years ago at the same point of the river, the local subordinate *(erh-ya)* representing the district magistrate was reported to have been dragged out by the queue, and much of the furniture of his yamên, down to the very tea-cups, taken with it, all "to stop the break in the bank." The salt-hongs which in ordinary times oppress the people by forcing them to pay full price for twelve ounces of salt instead of sixteen are, at times like these, open to reprisals of this nature. In short, any spite can be vented upon its victim with comparative impunity, if it is only done by a considerable number of persons, and under colour of using materials for the public good.

The manner in which the village bully domineers over all within his territory has been already illustrated. It is an instructive fact that sometimes *the village itself is a bully*, and its victims are the smaller villages lying around it, which dare not provoke their adversary. Among such tyrannizing communities are to be numbered some—though by no means all—villages which have for the principal surname either K'ung or Meng, the inhabitants

of which make it their boast that they are the lineal descendants of the two great sages of antiquity, and therefore feel themselves entitled to enjoy that variety of "liberty," outlined in the descriptive expression, "doing as I please, and making everything else do so too." A few months ago a company of men belonging to a bully village near the home of the writer, having occasion to dig earth from their land, did so in such a way as to encroach a little on a grave-lot belonging to a family in another village. The latter family remonstrated in vain, but as their surname was Meng they did not feel altogether helpless. After the brawl had gone on for a long time, with every prospect of serious fights and interminable law-suits, the aggrieved party prepared to send a messenger to Tsou hsien, the ancestral seat of the descendants of Mencius, to invoke their powerful aid to resent an attack upon a grave-yard of a branch of the clan. At this point the "peace-talker" emerged, and by a vast amount of palaver the matter was adjusted.

The assumption by these great families of extraordinary prerogatives is in striking contrast to the pre-eminently humble behaviour which is obligatory on those families who happen to be the only one of their name in a good sized village. Such families always expect to "eat imposition" and they are seldom disappointed. It has already been remarked that the Chinese contempt for the "outside" nations, although under conditions necessarily different, is of the same type as their contempt for an "outside village." The fixity of residence of the Chinese is such that it is generally difficult to move from one village to another, especially to a village at a distance. Such transfers are indeed constantly taking place, in consequence of the stress of poverty and other causes, but it is to be noted that the incoming man is not regarded as identified with the village where he "stays," but as an outsider. Even if he has been for a long time in the new home, he still tells you that he "lives" in the old place, no matter what its distance, and quite irrespective of whether he intends to return. In a village visited for famine relief, a woman complained that her name had been left out of the list by the headmen, who, upon being called to account, said that she did not "belong" to that village. In reply to a question, it was represented that she had only lived there about twelve years! A similar attitude, it may

be observed, is entertained in regard to a child which has been adopted from an "outside" village. It makes no difference that the parentage of the child is perfectly well-known; he is only "picked up," and so he continues as long as he lives. Indeed, we have known instances in which the same treatment is extended even to the second generation.

The clannishness of a village is frequently exhibited in the most insignificant affairs. The principle of the "boycott" is perhaps as old as Chinese society, and is nowhere more perfectly understood or practiced than in China. The Doctrine of the Mean does indeed recommend "indulgent treatment of men from a distance," in order that they may be attracted, but the Chinese, like the United States, have reached the point where "men from a distance" are by no means sure to be welcomed. If they are labourers, they are not to be employed as long as any labour is to be had at home. Foreigners are constantly offending this prejudice of the Chinese that a native has a "right" to a job. We have our views of our rights, as the Chinese have of theirs. The consequence sometimes is that workmen imported from elsewhere because they are cheaper or more capable, are set upon by the people of the place to which they have gone. They may be refused the use of water from the village wells—a favourite method of manifesting petty spite; or if they take their water supplies from a mud-hole, filth may be thrown into it so as to render the water unfit for use. If there is no direct way in which these workmen can be assailed, they are always open to reviling, which is freely indulged in.

The lack of cordial relations between villages which may happen to be contiguous is frequently illustrated in the insecurity of moveable property, especially of the crops. As these are more exposed to depredation than other forms of property, they are guarded with peculiar care. Sometimes a local league protects the standing crops, and any one caught trespassing is liable to be severely punished. But these stringent regulations apply only to those villages in which there is a common organization for watching the crops. To pilfer from *other villages*, albeit close neighbours, is considered to be good form. This places those who own land which is situated on the confines of the territory tributary to any particular village, at a disadvantage, and such land

may be sold at a price distinctly less than that of the same producing power, on account of its special liability to crop-thieves.

While these lines are in the process of being committed to paper, an excellent illustration of the relations which frequently subsist between adjacent villages is afforded by a young man who has called to ask advice. He lives in a relatively small village, which is at a short distance from a relatively large one. The latter is mainly composed of a single family, proud and overbearing. Like every other family of any size, it has many poor members, and among them are many bad characters. In fact the whole village is termed by its neighbouring villages a bad one, that is, it is among villages *a bully.* Now this young man happens to own six acres of land, which is surrounded by land belonging to the large village. Strangely enough, this land is situated in the bed of a river, which is mostly used as a viaduct for the surplus waters of the Grand Canal when the latter overflows. During the first part of the year this land is quite dry, and may be cultivated, but during the summer the waters are liable to come down at any time and inundate the crops. It is customary, therefore, to plant mainly tall millet and hemp, or to raise the *arundo indica*, a reed out of which the ordinary mats are made. All these growing to a great height, the two former are able to "keep their heads above water" for some time, while the latter is an aquatic plant. Now in the bed of a river, there are no regular roads, and the only way in which the young man is able to get to his land to cultivate or plant it, is by passing across the edge of another piece of ground, being careful, however, to do no injury to the standing crops. In these villages there is no public system of crop-watching, but each villager makes his own arrangements. Knowing the risks to which he is subjected from the contiguity of his land to a bully village, the young man was particular to employ a man from that village to watch the six acres. According to the ordinary programme in such cases, the man hired to watch the crops *himself stole a part of them,* but was detected in the act, and according to the usual course of proceedings would have been severely dealt with. But knowing that the young man was of a yielding disposition, the man who stole the crop which he is paid to guard, not only defied the owner, but sent a woman of his clan to the dwelling of the young man, to demand several

bushels of grain, as a payment for the privilege of crossing the outer strip of land. This demand was complied with, but the young man does not venture to go to law about the crop-stealing (although almost certain to win the case so far as the decision goes) because of the inevitable expenses, amounting to more than the whole value of the crop and the land. Yet if he allows the matter to drop, he justly fears that he will not be allowed in future to cultivate the land at all.

We have heard of a family of six brothers, all of whom but one joined the Roman Catholic church. On being asked why he remained aloof, they replied with simplicity that *it was absolutely necessary to have a man at liberty to do the family reviling and to play the bully when occasion arose*—much in the same way as a Berlin paper is said to have kept an editor expressly to serve the terms of imprisonment for libel sentences.

Principles similar to these are put in practice toward any natives of other regions, who trade in districts where they have no influential connections. The petty pilferers of any region are thoroughly organized, like the members of any other profession, and are under the control of the "thief-catching" department of the district magistrate's yamên. There is thus in China a peculiar pertinence in the saying "set a thief to catch a thief," for there is literally no other thief-capturing machinery.

An acquaintance of the writer who was a native of a district in the east end of a province, was driven by famine and flood to emigrate to the western end, where he at length succeeded in getting into a small but profitable business. One day, at a fair, he entered a cash-shop where he inadvertently laid down a string of cash, which at once disappeared as if it had evaporated. As the amount was to him a large one (about half a dollar) he was much distressed, and came to the writer to ask if something could not be done to recover his money. Now it is a dictum of the learned, as we have already mentioned, that in the good days of Yao and Shun whatever was lost was at once restored to its owner. But at present things are quite otherwise. Nothing is more difficult than to get back lost articles, although the owner and the individual who has found them are perfectly well-known. "A monkey's hand drops no dates," and "meat-balls thrown to a dog never return." Nothing will avail but personal influence, and

a great deal of complimentary language, in which the observation that "within the four seas all are brethren," will probably be judiciously intermingled with a certain amount of brass cash by way of testifying to the "harmony" existing between the owner and the finder. On this occasion a school-teacher, whose home was in the village where the fair was held, was commissioned to adjust the matter. This he did by seeking out the head petty-thief (one of his own cousins) and mentioning to him that the man who had been robbed was not so suitable a victim as had been supposed, as he was a friend of the foreigner, who was not to be trifled with. The head petty-thief assured his cousin that the affair was a mistake; the thief-guild did not know that the man was so respectably connected, for had they known it, he would not have been disturbed! The next day the money was returned, with the exception of a small sum for incidental expenses, and orders were issued to the thief-guild to let this man alone in future! Other similar instances have occurred in our experience, and in each case with the same result. It is invariably a "mistake;" it was not discovered that the person was one of our friends; it shall not happen again; and the property is always restored, less the small amount for commission!

The instinctive dislike of the Chinese toward strangers is exhibited in their behaviour to natives of other provinces who settle in large numbers in great commercial centres. In this case it is not poverty which makes the immigrant objectionable, for the traders from distant provinces are frequently men of great wealth, and they always establish powerful guilds of their own. Neither is rivalry the source of the dislike, for the interchange of products which is thus carried on is well recognized as a great benefit to both parties. The root of the matter is that the strangers are strangers. They are not like "us," and therefore, with an impartiality worthy of an ancient Greek, each party calls the other "barbarian."

The people of Canton are recognized by those of the northern provinces to be distinctly superior to themselves in many particulars, such as mechanical skill and trading capacity. Yet natives of these provinces always call the Cantonese "southern barbarians." The men of the north who go to the south are in like manner stigmatized as "northern Tartars," which means barbarians. The

Shansi men are the Jews of China, and the most capable bankers in the Empire, being in fact indispensable; but they are everywhere ridiculed, and are designated by many opprobrious names. In several of the northern provinces, a foreigner dressed in Chinese costume and travelling with the writer was repeatedly taken for a "Cantonese." A friend of the writer, whose home was in Canton, took her servants to Swatow on a visit. A servant belonging to the latter port came to his mistress, remarking that there was a man outside who looked something like a Chinese, and who wore Chinese dress, even to the queue, but he "could not talk a word of Chinese!" Yet Swatow and Canton are situated in the same province. The dislike and contempt felt by the Chinese for outsiders of their own race is conspicuously manifested in the southern provinces in the treatment of the Hakkas—whose very name indicates that they are "stranger-families." The mutual animosities of these immigrants and of the natives of the south played an important part in the history of the great T'ai-p'ing rebellion, the leader of which was considered to be a Hakka. The Hakkas seem to have come from the north at a remote time, and all certain trace of their origin is lost. "These fellows," say the Cantonese, "do not know who their own ancestors were!"

Since the foregoing paragraph was written, one of the Chinese newspapers published at Canton has printed a complaint of the manner in which the Cantonese dealers, who visit the adjacent province of Fukien to buy tea, are treated while there. Cantonese who go on such errands, it says, "*are treated as foreigners*, and have to pay very high prices, not only for tea, but for everything else they want."

An incidental but striking confirmation of the reality of the Chinese prejudice against those of their own race who happen to have been born elsewhere, is found in the fact often observed, that a man who visits another part of China for the first time is almost sure to be impressed with the evil qualities of the people. One of the most recent examples of this which we have met, was a fortune-teller, who had wandered widely and whose craft had not brought him into contact with the best classes anywhere. Being sent on an errand to one of the central provinces, this man came back with such an account of the depravity of the people (although he was not himself in any way a sufferer thereby) as

might have suggested the tales of an Australian as to the condition of society in the palmy days of Botany Bay. Even their language of reviling, was, he said, of a startlingly depraved description! Something analogous to criticisms of this sort may be occasionally seen in the translations from the *Peking Gazette.* Governors and other high officers constantly memorialize the Throne, to the effect that the people in the particular province governed by these officers are of a peculiarly intractable disposition, constantly liable to violent outbreaks; it will therefore be necessary to allow the provincial officials large liberty of inflicting the death penalty in criminal cases of urgency, without waiting for a reference to Peking. A few years since, the governors and governors-general of several different provinces made precisely the same representation on this subject, each claiming that his province should be an exception to the general rule.

Of the characteristic absence of public spirit in China we have already spoken at length. It is manifested in more ways than one can enumerate. The "public" is to a Chinese a mere "legal fiction," while he and his interests are the only real facts. The man who having dug a well arranges the sweep so that it will cross a highway and make it impossible for carts to pass while water is drawn, is an epitome of the Empire. So is the man who throws a scoopful of dirty water on the dusty road, or a shovel half full of earth on a muddy one, holding out his palm in each case to the next traveller as though benefactors to their species such as himself ought to be rewarded at sight. An inn-keeper will not even fill up a deep hole at the entrance to his hostelry, though he has visible evidence that other inns, that are unprovided with mud-holes, will draw away his custom. Long lines of carts leave Chinese inns at a very early hour, travelling together for mutual protection. But if a party of bandits is discreet enough to attack the last cart, and let the others escape, it is the testimony of those who ought to know the facts, that the plundering will go on unhindered, unless the unlucky carter happens to have some special connection with the others.

It is a proverb current in Western lands, that there is honour even among thieves. A similar code may prevail in China, for aught that we know, but it is subject to some peculiar variations, owing to the exigencies of Chinese judical proceedings. Accounts

published in the native papers, and as in a recent instance, in the *Peking Gazette*, show that it is a common proceeding on the part of the Chinese robbers, when one of their number has been wounded or is otherwise incapacitated from effective flight, *to kill him, as the only way to make sure that he will not testify against the rest.*

In Western lands, it is thought to be an argument for favouring a scheme that it is evidently for the general good. Individuals are occasionally found who are inaccessible to appeals based upon this claim, but it must be a peculiar community in which the general level of public sentiment would allow to be thwarted a plan which was manifestly for the public welfare, and which could do no one any harm. Yet we know of a large port in China, where the attempt to purchase ground for a native dispensary and hospital, to be under the control of the Chinese themselves, was entirely blocked by the *literati* of the place, apparently for no other reason than that the enterprise was promoted as well as suggested by foreigners.*

The same exemplification of the policy known to history as that of the dog-in-the-manger was frequently met with in the famine relief. On three several occasions the writer was waited upon by a deputation of headmen from various villages, setting forth the perishing condition of their several constituencies, and humbly imploring the benevolent foreigner to visit their insignificant hamlets and administer "water to fishes in a dry rut." On each of these occasions a cart was provided to escort the inspector, and on each occasion trouble arose as to the return trip of the cart. The difficulty seemed to be to decide who should pay for the scanty fare of the nearly starved animal used to drag the cart, or perhaps how much was to be allowed for the use of the wretched beast itself or for the cart. On each of these occasions disputes lasting several hours took place. In one instance a lean horse much resembling a scare-crow was at last found to do compulsory duty, but in the other two villages after the inspection was over no vehicle was forthcoming, and in spite of repeated

* Some years ago a public-spirited foreign resident of Chefoo found the road between his house and the settlement in a shocking condition, and set about repairing it himself. The petty magistrate sent orders to stop him, saying that the work belonged to the magistrate, and no one else was to do it. From that time to the present, nothing has been done about it.

promises none ever did come forth, the foreigners being in each case allowed to make the best of their way home on foot to a distance of several miles. One of these villages had a population of several thousand persons, and the money involved could not have amounted to more than twenty-five cents. Besides this, there was the imminent danger, vividly set forth by an irate assistant in the distribution, that the whole village would be allowed to starve, as a penalty for the shabby treatment which the inspectors experienced. Yet considerations of this sort were inadequate to provide the small sum which was necessary to adjust matters. Each individual concerned was entirely absorbed in seeing to it that *he* did nothing for which he was not paid, whether the village as a whole did or did not starve in consequence of his acts.

It is a common Chinese saying, that *if* three men are united in heart, they can turn yellow earth to gold. This seems like a vigorous figure of speech, but there is more truth in it than at first appears. After extended experience of their social relations, one does not wonder that the Chinese erect temples to the three men who were the most famous examples in Chinese history of a fraternal alliance, Chang Fei, Liu Pei, and Kuan Yü. The mutual suspicion which has been so fully illustrated generally prevents harmony of action, although there may often be a high degree of apparent unity. It is a popular adage that if the literary graduates of the first degree *(hsiu-ts'ai)* were left undisturbed to get up a rebellion, they could not accomplish it in three years. Absolute selfishness and mutual suspicion would ordinarily prevent the enterprise from coming to a head, just as in the case of the T'ai-p'ing rebellion selfishness and suspicion ultimately caused the ruin of that formidable movement which seemed for more than a decade to threaten the very existence of the Empire. Rebellions are indeed of constant occurrence, as has already been remarked, but the wonder is that they are not far more numerous. Things must have come to a desperate pass when the mass of the Chinese population deliberately defy the government. Even in cases of local disturbance, when there appears to the Chinese to be no safety except such as may be got by the protection of earthen walls thrown up around villages, and when the danger, being most imminent, requires instant action, it is sometimes

difficult to secure sufficient unanimity to make a wall possible. In one such case near to the writer's home, a large village disagreed, and actually separated into two sections, throwing up two distinct circumvallations, one for each end of the town, to the mutual inconvenience of each, and at a great additional expense.

A conspicuous and typical instance of Chinese inability to combine successfully for the common welfare is afforded by the experience of a part of the province of Shantung, in the matter of its grain-tax. For many years abuses have been allowed, by which fractions of a pint or a peck (due at a fixed rate per acre), however small these fractions may be, are treated as if they were whole numbers of the next higher denomination. By this simple device, the aggregate amount of grain exacted from the people is enormously increased. Although it is very difficult to get matters of this sort brought to the attention of the authorities in Peking, since each intermediate official blocks the way, the most indefatigable exertions on the part of a few persons, who were unquestionably possessed of a commendable amount of public spirit, have resulted in getting the complaint heard and judgment given. Imperative orders are known to have been sent from Peking to the principal authorities, to have a stop put at once to these extortions. But such is the proverbial collusion between all Chinese officials that in every case these peremptory orders have been suppressed at some point, or have been totally disregarded after they have been received. Experience of similar extortions elsewhere makes it altogether probable that if the people of the districts interested could but combine, they would ultimately be completely successful, and many lucrative posts would be vacated. But as it is, with every motive for such combination, there is no visible prospect that sufficient public spirit and harmony will ever be found to accomplish it.

The relations of the nature of the government of China to the subjects under discussion are numerous and important, but a full development of them would require much greater knowledge than we possess, and would besides occupy a volume. The subject of mutual responsibility has been already treated at length, and an effort made to do justice to its excellencies. But it must not be overlooked that it is also accompanied by grave evils to which we have already adverted, and which were pointed out more than

forty years ago by Mr. Thomas Taylor Meadows. If an officer is responsible for the existence of crimes which he does not find it easy to control, or of which he is ignorant till it is too late to prevent them, he will inevitably conceal the facts so as to screen himself. This is what constantly happens in all departments of the government, to the complete subversion of justice.

Two additional evils connected with the official system have been noticed by every writer on China. One of them is the absence of independent salaries for the officers, whose allowances are so absurdly small that often they would not pay the expenses of the yamên for a day. Besides this, the officials are subject to so many forfeitures that it is said that they rarely draw their nominal allowances at all, as it would be necessary to pay them all back again in fines, and at each payment they would be squeezed in the process. The other vicious element in the system is that conglomeration of duties in one office which renders it both a physical and a moral impossibility that these duties should be properly discharged. A man who is at once the civil and the criminal judge, the sheriff, the coroner, and the tax commissioner for a large and populous district, cannot possibly attend to the details of all his work. The absolute necessity for levying squeezes and taking bribes arises from the fact that *there is no other way by which a magistrate can exist.*

In what has been already said of the comparative freedom from exaction enjoyed by the Chinese people, reference was made to the mass of population, and not to those who fall within the scope of the official lasso, which is very likely to strangle all that it encloses. It is proverbially within the power of a district magistrate to exterminate a whole family, and how often this terrible power is exercised can never be known. Instances are continually coming to light, through documents published in the *Peking Gazette*, as well as by the reports of foreigners scattered all over the eighteen provinces, showing that when Chinese government is at its worst, it is difficult to exaggerate its defects. The relation of the officers to one another is compendiously expressed in the familiar adage and already previously quoted, "the large fish eat the small fish, the small fish eat the water-insects, the water-insects eat the water-plants, the water-plants live on the mud."

Space can be given but for two instances out of many, of the conspicuous absence of altruism on the part of the officials of China toward the people, whose "fathers and mothers" they are supposed to be. One of these relates to the collusion between the authorities and the worst classes of the people, when the latter are in league with the unscrupulous rich.

Not many years ago, the governor of the province of Hunan made a long report, which was published in the *Gazette*, embodying the results of his enquiries into a system of organized kidnapping and slavery existing in that province in the district of Lei-yang. Several hundred coal mines, or "holes," in that districts, are worked until they are flooded, when it is necessary to employ much labour to bail them out. An extensive association called a "Water Contract Hong," composed of the vilest elements of society, invested great sums of money in gambling establishments, which in combination with wine and eating shops contrived not only to fleece large numbers of innocent people out of all their means of existence, but at the same time to load them down with heavy rates of interest on gambling debts, until in despair of escaping from their tormentors the poor victims were forced to sell themselves, when they were driven into the mines. Other persons were sometimes kidnapped for the same purpose. Over the entrance to these places of torture might well have been written the inscription which Dante found at the mouth of hell, "Who enters here, leaves hope behind." The victims are "stripped of every garment they possess even down to their shoes and are made to bail out the water in turn. This operation goes on day and night without intermission, and the cold and hunger they endure excite no pity in the hearts of their task-masters. If they show the slightest symptoms of fatigue, they are beaten on the back with whips, and if they attempt to escape, their feet are stabbed with knives. The mines are dark and the atmosphere damp and chilly, while the nature of the work is so extraordinarily painful that the more weakly constitutions frequently succumb after half a month of toil, while even the hardy find their feet mortify and their bellies swell after a few months of this treatment. They are not allowed to rest, and no medical remedies are given them when they are sick, their tormentors calmly sitting by, as they die before their eyes. A still more heart-rending

circumstance is the fact that when the mines cease to be worked in the spring, the unhappy 'water-frogs' who have managed to survive the horrors they have endured are still detained by the water-hongs in their dungeons, that they may be available when the next season for bailing water comes on. They have no communication with the outside world, and in many of these mines some hundreds of poor wretches must be annually done to death, while in none is the mortality less than some score or so a year. When they die, they are buried in some hole in the mountain side, and as their relatives and friends know nothing of their fate, no report of the deaths is made, or inquest held upon their bodies. Prohibition has succeeded prohibition against indulgence in these barbarities, but the miners and water-hongs have hitherto managed to evade them. The prefect has, however, now sent for the miners, and has distinctly forbidden the use of such names as 'water-frogs,' etc., with the barbarities which they conceal. They have been made to sign a bond undertaking to refrain from such practices in the future, and this bond has been placed on record."

The same memorial mentions the existence in previous years of abuses of precisely this class, in the mines to the west of Peking. Those who are acquainted with Chinese official life, will perceive the meaning of the remark that while these practices have been again and again forbidden, the water-hongs and miners have "*managed to evade them.*" The most careless reader must be struck by the circumstance that *the only punishment* dealt out to the authors of this long established and outrageous system of cruelty is a stern refused to allow them to call their labourers "water-frogs" in future, and requiring their signature to a bond promising not to murder any more of them!

Bad as these cases are, they are still exceptional and local. They involve but a comparatively small number of officials. Other and still more instructive examples of the treatment of its subjects by the government are seen on those numerous occasions, on which there is a maximum of danger from rebels, or of suffering from flood and famine. The instinct of self-preservation does of course lead to efforts to put down every rebellion, and in the end these efforts always succeed. But in the meantime, for long periods before the dilatory movements of the officials even bring

relief in sight, the poor people suffer many miseries. And it not infrequently happens that the oppression of those sent to put down the uprising is an evil so much greater than the rebellion, that the poor people are driven in self-defence to join the rebels.

That local anarchy of the worst type may co-exist with a government which is so strong as to be perfectly able to put down rebellions when its strength is brought to bear, is one of the strange phenomena of the Chinese Empire. Without specifying details, it must suffice to mention the significant existence in such widely sundered provinces as Shansi, Szechuan and Shantung, of great numbers of mountain fortresses, into which the people make a practice of retreating as soon as a period of lawlessness sets in, abandoning all that is not moveable to the bands of pillagers. In some regions these forts on the tops of almost inaccessible mountains are the most conspicuous objects in the landscape, and in some of these enclosures, we have been assured, terrible massacres have taken place within the past quarter of a century. The people have learned ages ago that if it is desirable to avoid extermination, it can only be accomplished by doing for themselves as well as they can what the government ought to do for them.

A similar spectacle is presented whenever a river breaks its banks and inundates a vast region. It is often not easy to secure remission of the taxes, even when the people have nothing to eat, and in the great majority of cases government relief of the suffering region is apparently never thought of by any one. In the great floods which have resulted from the changes of channel in the Yellow River within the past few years, and in the simultaneous famines in Honan, Anhui, Shantung, and Shingking, the government has done far more for relieving the sufferers than it did in the great famine of 1877-78. But there are many reasons for suspecting that this relief—limited at best—is due to what some philosophers have termed "enlightened selfishness," and from a clearer perception than heretofore that, in levying taxes, out of nothing, nothing comes.

When the director general of the Yellow River, by whose exertions the seemingly impossible task of closing the great breach has been accomplished, suggests to the Emperor that the only adequate method of dealing with the mighty problem

presented by China's Sorrow is an extended survey, the proposition is rebuked as "premature and ostentatious." Enormous sums are lavished on an Imperial wedding, but no outlay is provided for the relief of three provinces ruined by the Yellow River. At the same time when foreign funds were sent into famine-stricken districts, to buy grain for the relief of people who were starving by hundreds of thousands, the government was exporting grain from these same regions to be sent to Peking as taxes. The people are constantly made to realize that the collection of the government tax is the main feature in current history. If any part of this tax is remitted (in consideration of its being impossible to collect it), this is called "Imperial favour." It seems to be the ordinary practice in China, for the magistrates peremptorily to forbid the export of food supply, whenever there is any danger of a scarcity, altogether irrespective of what the effect of such prohibition must be. A memorial in the *Peking Gazette* published in August 1890, called attention to the fact that in the previous year, the governor-general of the two Kiang provinces, had forbidden the export of rice from that province. The result was a great increase in the cost of rice elsewhere, throughout the Empire, so that by the autumn of 1889, rice was actually commanding a higher price in the province of Fukien, which is largely dependent upon Kiangsu, than in Soochow, which was the centre of an innundated district. On the occasion of the great floods in the North of China in 1890, the Emperor ordered these restrictions removed. Acting upon the principle in question during a famine in the province of Shantung, in 1888, a considerable number of district magistrates holding posts adjacent to the regions where the crops had wholly failed, issued proclamations peremptorily forbidding the sale of grain to outside districts. This action was taken because it was feared that the sale of grain, to supply the natural demand in other quarters, might increase the difficulty of collecting the grain-tax in the regions where there was no famine. It was of no consequence to these magistrates that the poor people in the adjacent districts had nothing to eat, and were pulling down their houses, to get money to buy food. Considerations of this sort have little weight with Chinese officials, who have their own living to make and their superiors to satisfy. The vast masses of people driven from their homes by the utter impossibility

of securing any food for themselves and their families drifted hither and thither, begging as they went. Considerable bodies of refugees of this sort, whose home was in the province of Shantung, having heard a rumour that labour was in demand in Shensi at a distance of a journey of a month or two to the west, bent their weary footsteps in that direction. When they reached the boundaries of Shensi, their arrival made a commotion. The people petitioned the local magistrates against them, the local magistrates made representations to the governor, and the governor in turn communicated with the governor of Shantung. The latter official apologized for the irruption of his people, as if Shensi and Shantung had been different kingdoms, and a proclamation was issued notifying the natives of Shantung to keep out of other provinces where they are not wanted. If they have occasion to starve to death, let them do it decently at their own homes, or as near to them as convenient. Occurrences of this sort, which are perfectly well known and which excite no surprise in anyone but a foreigner, serve to call once more to mind that passage in the Confucian Classics, which mentions that (theoretically) "Within the Four Seas all are brethren."

The relations of this subject to the intercourse between Chinese and foreigners are numerous and important. Human nature, we need not pause to remark, is the same all over the world, but there are wide variations in the forms of its exhibition. Some of the most instructive of those exhibitions in China, as we have already mentioned, are to be met with in the relations between masters and servants. That the Chinese are in many respects most excellent servants we not only admit but maintain against all comers. Some of the best national characteristics, to which we have already devoted much space, are abundantly illustrated by Chinese servants. Many of them have a sense of intense loyalty to their masters, worthy of the feudal ages, and it is very common for women employed as nurses of young foreign children to become far more attached to these infants than to their own. We have known a servant whose master had left China, and who, upon the return of his master temporarily, threw up all his engagements and devoted himself exclusively to his master's interests during the time of his stay. Cases are known

in which the same Chinese servant has been kept in employ by a foreign master for more than thirty years.

But as there are certain parts of China which produce better rice than others, so there are certain parts which produce better servants, and as some generations have now elapsed since the demand for Chinese servants began, it is reasonable to suppose that the good qualities have tended to survive. The best way to ascertain the real quality of the raw material of which China is full is to plunge into the "deep interior," and take for servants whomsoever you can get. Thus doing, one may be able to acquire a stock of experience in a year, with which twenty years of life in a port could not for a moment compete. A person who had been engaged as table-boy, under these circumstances, was set to serve at a feast which was provided by a foreigner for a Chinese family party. During the progress of the meal, this individual disappeared, leaving no one to wait upon the guests. Upon enquiry it was ascertained that he had "gone home." In response to enquiries the next day, this man, who was endowed with a melancholy mien, explained that *he had guests at his house*, and that it therefore became necessary for him to go and wait upon them! This is but a sample of instances in which there is the calm assumption on the part of a Chinese for whose time and service you have paid—not improbably in advance—that *his* interests are the first to be considered. Being sent for to do a particular piece of work, he is found to have "gone home," with the message that he cannot come to-day, as he has an "engagement."

The topic of "flexible inflexibility," has already been treated, like most others, inadequately, but it is necessary to revert to it once again. So far as we are able to judge, this quality can only be seen to the best advantage in districts which are strictly rural; but where it is found at all, it produces stalwart specimens adapted to win prizes in international exhibitions. The cook absolutely declines to wash his dish-towels in such a way that it is possible to determine whether he has done it at all. Torture cannot force him to broil his beef-steak, if he has once become accustomed to fry it. If the fatal and mysterious element of "face" enters into the matter, it is all up with the poor master, who must either yield the point or the servant. A good-natured rustic who knew how to cook, and who in emergencies did not disdain to wait at table,

could not to be induced to keep away the flies from the same, during a trying period of the dog-days. After one or two mild waves of a fan, he gently but firmly retired to the kitchen. Crafty diplomacy succeeded at length in eliciting the information that his objection to this particular form of exertion was based upon sound reasoning. Chinese play-actors are regarded as a low and depraved class of the community. Among play-actors the least respectable are those set to do the "stage business" of acting as lackeys, whisking a fly-brush, etc. In view of these associations, no self-respecting rustic could be found who would wield a fan over a dining table, though he might be induced to draw a rope which moves a "punkah!"

The country boy, a large part of whose time is spent with a basket on his back, roaming along the roads in quest of manure, when taken into a foreign family where he receives more money in a month than he ever owned in all his previous life, absolutely refuses to do such degrading work as emptying slops. We have known repeated instances in which lads too poor to know whether they would have a regular meal three times a day at their homes, have stood with inexorable firmness on this detail and because of it have with apparent cheerfulness given up their places. Like the lady who refused to "smooth pillow cases" on a Sunday, they felt obliged "to draw the line somewhere;" she drew hers at pillow-cases—they drew theirs at slop-buckets. A foreigner once employed a city youth of a very firmly compacted character, who was told to wheel the baby-carriage during an afternoon walk of his employers. Previous experience had made him cautious about refusal, but compliance was out of the question. After a moment's hesitation he said that he would run out and call a man who would do it. He was told that this was superfluous, as the master was fully equal to the task, and he could pay *him!* Accordingly, at the end of the month the sensitive youth was presented with his wages, *less* five-hundred cash, payment for the times when he had engaged his employer as a substitute! This case is mentioned to enforce the remark that "face" is at the bottom of many such ebullitions of obstinacy. Wheeling a baby-carriage is a woman's work, and must not be done by a man of lofty self-respect. Yet this same sensitive individual, for a small extra payment, did *all the washing* for the infant whom he could not wheel in her carriage!

To "cut off one's nose to spite one's face" is in China a proceeding too common to attract the least attention. A boatman or a carter who is engaged to go wherever the foreigner who hires his boat may direct, sometimes positively refuses to fulfil his contract. The inflexible obstinacy of a Chinese carter on such occasions is aptly illustrated by the behaviour of one of his mules, which on coming to a particularly dusty place in the road, lies down with great deliberation to its dust-bath. The carter meantime lashes the mule with his whip to the utmost limit of his strength, but in vain. The mule is as indifferent as if a fly were tickling it. In considering the phenomena to which this is analogous we have been frequently reminded of the caustic comments of De Quincey, in which, with a far too sweeping generalization, he affirms that the Chinese race is endued with "an obstinacy like that of mules." The Chinese are not obstinate like mules, for the mule does not change his mood, while the same obstreperous carter who defies his employer in the middle of his journey, though expressly warned that his "wine-money" will be wholly withheld should be persist, is at the end of the journey ready to spend half a day in pleading and in *k'o-tous* for the favour which at a distance he treated with contemptuous scorn. That a traveller should have a written agreement with his carters, boatmen, etc., is a matter of ordinary prudence. As we have explained in treating of the Chinese talent for misunderstanding, no loophole for a possible misconstruction must be left open. And yet, whatever his care on this point, money will probably make the foreigner in China more trouble than any other single cause. "Money and clothes rule the world" says the Chinese proverb, in a sense which seems to the foreigner new and peculiar.

No quotation from the classics is more frequently to be seen over the doors of Chinese shops than the words "Consider uprightness as gain." Viewed in the light of one's ordinary experience in shops and out of them, few quotations will strike the stranger as combining to a greater degree the sober and the grotesque. To ask a Chinese for money is like enquiring if he has a central incisor tooth which he can conveniently spare. If one has business dealings with any Chinese, he is likely to be reminded of the school-boy's erroneous formula, "Man is composed of water and avaricious tissue." The Chinese are like children in respect

to the undisguised prominence which they give to their own claims and desires. "I have heard that your cousin is married and settled in Japan" said a mother to her daughter, "and that she is very happy." "Bosh about happy" was the unsympathetic reply; "did she say anything about that Japanese doll that I want?"

If a Chinese refuses money when it is offered to him, it is almost invariably for one of two reasons, either because he is afraid to take it, or far more probably because there is not enough of it. The famous Chinese officer Yang Chen, of the After Han dynasty, refused a bribe, and when told that if he accepted it no one would know, replied "Heaven knows, Earth knows, you know and I know." It is not unreasonable to suppose that there may be Chinese at the present day who are as upright as Yang Chen, but if so they are at least known only to "Heaven" and "Earth."

For an Occidental to learn how to bargain with Orientals, is a task involving much time. Boundless tact and infinite patience are the prime requisites. Not infrequently no bargain can be made, because between such intimate friends money must not be so much as mentioned. But that is no guarantee that, when the time for payment comes at last, the same man who was so delicate in his sensibilities that he could not bring himself to name any price at all will not raise a tempestuous disturbance, because he has not made so much by his generous refusal as he expected to do.

In one of his volumes recording the process by which the Congo Free State was opened, Stanley has given a description of his dealings with a certain native tribe. He had bought land for a station, which had afterwards been destroyed by the natives. This necessitated some retaliation, and a subsequent "peace," followed by a gratuity on his part, to make the peace perpetual. Having previously exacted an indemnity from them, he now gave to each one of the fifteen chiefs and elders a piece of cloth and ten brass rods, amounting in value to much more than the indemnity they had paid. Then their greed showed itself. Leaving their presents on the ground, they went aside to hold a palaver, after which one of them reported to Stanley. "Bula Matari (Breaker of Rocks) we have been considering together. We are all of one mind, that you ought to give each of us two pieces

of cloth and twenty brass rods to celebrate this peace." "Take away the presents," said Stanley to his servants. "It is enough," he continued, waving his hand to the chiefs. "The land is yours. Take it; we will depart forever. I am tired of you." Up sprang the chiefs. "No! no! no!" shouted one of them, arresting the servants' movement. 'Stop! Be not angry with us; this is the custom of the Wy-yanzi. If you had given us four thousand brass rods, we should have asked for ten thousand; if you had given us ten thousand, we should have asked for ten times that number. Do not leave us. Give us the cloth and the rods, and we will go and celebrate the peace. Does not Bula Matari know the Wy-yanzi yet? Why, the greed of the Wy-yanzi is as insatiable as the appetite of the hippopotamus. Wy-yanzi love money too well to fight any more. So live in peace, and let your heart rest." The Wy-yanzi are barbarous, and the Chinese are civilized, but there will be times when the latter will suggest the former. "When one demands a price that reaches to heaven," says the proverb, "pay him a price that comes down to the earth."

Have any of our readers had the pleasure of building a house in China, with Chinese contractors and Chinese workmen? Do any of those who have done it once thirst to do it again? Every one appears to have his finger in the pie, and each finger is matched by a thumb ready to extract a plum. Upon such occasions we have been reminded of the small boy who was shown the picture of Daniel in the lion's den, and who was much disturbed because there was a little lion that seemed to be so much in the background, as to be likely "not to get any Daniel at all!" Those workmen who may be paid by the day come late and go early. Sad to relate, they will at times, dawdle over their work. A friend of the writer watched his carpenters, until he felt impelled to show them a better way, but he was warned by them not to touch the laths lest he should "spoil" them. Having in the early part of his life had opportunities of earning money by nailing on lathing at so much per square yard, our friend was not the tyro that he seemed. Waiting until the workmen had gone to dinner, he seized a bundle of laths, distributed them in rows over the floor, and with his mouth full of nails he rapidly drove in each one far enough to hold it in place. When this was completed, he took a quantity of laths in his hand, and as each one was

adjusted to its place, the nails were driven in with one sharp stroke (instead of six or eight dull ones). By this means while the carpenters were eating their meal, he was able to do as much work as all four of them had accomplished in half a day.

The mere task of keeping their tools in repair is for Chinese workmen a serious matter in expenditure of time. If the tools belong to the foreigner, however, there is no embarrassment on this score. They are broken mysteriously, and yet no one has touched them. *Non est inventus* is the appropriate motto for them all. Poles and small rafters are pitched over the wall, and all the neighbourhood loins appear to be girded with the rope which was purchased for supporting the staging. During the entire progress of the work, each day is a crisis. All previous experience goes for nothing. The sand, the lime, the earth of *this* place will not do for any of the uses for which sand, lime and earth are in general supposed to be adapted. The foreigner is helpless. He is aptly represented by Gulliver held down by threads, which, taken together are too much for him. Permanently have we enshrined in our memory a Cantonese contractor, whose promises, like his money, vanished in smoke, for he was unfortunately a victim of the opium pipe. At last forbearance having ceased to be a virtue, he was confronted with a formidable bill of particulars of the things wherein he had come short. "You were told the size of the glass. You measured the windows three several times. Everyone of those you have made is wrong, and they are useless. Not one of your doors is properly put together. There is not an ounce of glue about them. The flooring-boards are short in length, short in number, full of knot-holes, and wholly unseasoned." After the speaker had proceeded in this way for some time, the mild mannered Cantonese gazed at him sadly, and when he brought himself to speak he remarked, in a tone of gentle remonstrance, "Don't say dat! Don't say dat. *No gentleman talk like dat.*" The *encroachments* and *exactions* of the Chinese which are a constant factor in their intercourse with foreigners are to the latter peculiarly exasperating, yet they can no more be escaped than the heat, or the dust, or the insects. Of the ordinary Chinese, specially in his relations to foreigners, it may be affirmed as Mr. Arthur Sketchley's Mrs. Brown was wont to observe of "Old Brown," "*open your mouth, and he's down your throat.*" The camel

with his nose in the tent, ultimately followed by his whole vast bulk, is not more a type of the insinuating progress of the Chinese toward complete possession of whatever they assail, than is that elephant which being carried by rail on a forward freight car, and having become thirsty, reached out his proboscis and drained the water from the tender, thus bringing the whole train to a standstill.

The method by which the Chinese take advantage of the ignorance, the helplessness, or the good-nature of the foreigners, is illustrated by the experience of a friend of the writer, who took up his abode in the capital city of an interior province. Seeing in his court-yard a pariah dog acting in a suspicious manner, and fearing lest his little son who was playing about the court might be bitten by an animal which was not improbably becoming rabid, the father took his revolver, and despatched the worthless and dangerous beast. A sewing woman who was employed in the household, happening to pass by, saw the dog dying, and went upon the street to spread the news. It was not long before one of the neighbours appeared to say that this particular dog was his own darling, and restitution must be made for its untimely destruction. To this the foreigner naturally objected, and the dispute waxed violent and was most unreasonably protracted. It was at last settled by "peace-talkers" who agreed that the slayer of the dog should pay a sum nearly equivalent to five Mexican dollars, for a "coffin" for the dog, and almost half as much more to soothe the lacerated feelings of the dog's "master," who had no more real connection with the beast than has the reader of these lines. Taught by experience, the next time it became necessary to kill a vagabond dog, the foreigner took care to administer strychnine in a very disguised form late at night, promptly excluding the dog from the court-yard. The next morning the gate-keeper mentioned that during the night the poor thing had died of "starvation," and this time the foreigner was saved the expense of a "coffin."

Of the universal talent for absorbing, we have spoken elsewhere, but it is a more prominent and more constant feature of life in China, than we are able at first to apprehend. So far as foreigners are concerned, restrictions upon the Chinese do not restrict. Chinese who would promptly resent the smallest intrusion

into the "court of the women" of their own houses, will take advantage of an unguarded moment, and swarm all over foreign premises, calmly plucking fruit and flowers as they wander about, observing in reply to a challenge that they are only "amusing themselves." In their treatment of this type of cases, foreigners may be roughly divided into two general classes, the tolerant and the flinty. To be calm and self-poised in the midst of such experinces, is a "fine art." A grasping Chinese is occasionally "met up with," in a gratifying way, as was an inn-keeper who having been paid liberally at night, as the foreigners were leaving his yard the next morning demanded something further. "But if you had anything to say, why did you not say it last night when I paid you?" plausibly objected the treasurer of the party. "Oh," was the ready reply, "I thought, 'I will see you again to-morrow.'" "Just so," remarked the flinty foreigner, "*I will see you again to-morrow;*" with which observation he mounted his mule and rode away!

That any Chinese or for that matter any foreigner who is in the habit of resisting the encroachments of those who feel that it is their duty to take all they can, will be unpopular, is a matter of course. We have already spoken of the ways in which those Chinese who are obliged to have funerals or weddings are imposed upon by their many friends. If one who is put in charge of any particular department of the complicated accounts, incident to such occasions, makes it too difficult for the other assistants to feather their nests to the extent which they had expected, it is customary to remonstrate with him in a characteristically Chinese way. When he is engaged in performing his duties, those whom he has thus offended post themselves as near to him as possible, and with small bamboo syringes with which they have provided themselves, squirt streams of oil over his fine holiday clothes. This is a practice so well understood, that it must be taken into consideration. Recently an elderly Chinese with whom the writer is well acquainted, remarked that if he officiated at a certain funeral, he should be *careful to wear his old clothes*.

It is a question in regard to which it is easy to engage in long discussions, whether the Chinese are or are not "grateful." Doubtless they do not appear to be so, but rather to resemble the primitive Hawaiian, who having no word in his language

meaning "Thank you," on being notified of a gift was accustomed to reply "Ho-mai," "fork over," signifying thereby, "that is just what I want." But it does not certainly follow because the Chinese do not ordinarily exhibit gratitude, that they do not feel it. "When the dumb man swallows a tooth," runs the adage, "he may not say much about it, but it is all inside." The gratitude which has been felt by many thousands of Chinese for the help unexpectedly received in times of famine relief, has been very great and very sincere. Of this there has often been unquestionable evidence, although a minimum of demonstrativeness. It is not in such cases as these that the lack of gratitude is most prominent, but in the more ordinary ones of daily occurrence, where one favour conferred is frequently made the basis of a clear demand for others of a more advanced character.

It is not in famine relief only that instances of marked gratitude on the part of Chinese, are to be met, but in dispensary and hospital work as well. As the Chinese are undemonstrative, such gratitude is by no means certain to come to the knowledge of those who have earned it. It is, on the other hand, a common experience to find that those who happen to live nearest to such institutions as a foreign dispensary and hospital, are the ones who manifest least gratitude, coming to regard these establishments as if set up for their especial behoof, and the medical staff as obliged to attend to the wants of these immediate neighbours, whether in or out of regular hours. "Come, open the doors, and give me the medicine that I want, for I am busy and have no time to waste." If the dispensary regulations are adhered to, and the demand is not met, such persons will go away and revile the hospital and all those connected with it, taking care, however, to visit it the next time they happen to require help.

It is a constant experience of foreigners in China, to meet Chinese who happen to be "out of travelling money," and who wish the foreigner to contribute to help them to their destination. It is of course easy to imagine circumstances in which this state of things might happen to any one anywhere, but it happens to the Chinese always and everywhere. When a Chinese who is travelling, meets another Chinese with whom he is acquainted, nothing is more common than to hear that one of them is obliged to "borrow" a little "travelling money" from the other. We have

known scores, and perhaps hundreds of Chinese patients on arrival at a foreign hospital where some of them were to undergo serious surgical operations, to be unprovided with money for more than a day or two of economical use. In one instance, after completing a journey of more than 150 miles, two men who wished to be cured of cataract of the eyes, were obliged to return the next day, because they were "out of travelling money." We have heard a Chinese complain of the lack of good manners on the part of a foreigner whom the Chinese had gone a long way to see, because the foreigner never so much as enquired whether his friend was "out of travelling money!" To the foreigner such behaviour appears no doubt very preposterous, but he will find the state of things here described everywhere very real, and well adapted to tax to the utmost his altruistic powers. "But I do not know you," said a traveller, in reply to the importunities of a Neapolitan beggar. "That is the very reason, my lord, why I ask you," was the prompt reply. The Chinese reason from the other end, and says, "You know my father, please help me," or possibly, "I know your father, therefore you must give me a lift." In either case, he takes as a matter of course whatever he can get, perhaps, remarking "that will do," if it is an article, and if it is money almost certainly, "it is not enough." With some people of experience it is a matter of routine practice never to praise a Chinese servant, on the ground that praise is a stimulant certain to be followed by a reaction. Never give a servant a gratuity, say others, for if you do, they are undone, and will never serve you without the repetition of the dose.

A foreign physician living in an interior province was called in to aid in bringing to life a concubine of a wealthy man, by whom she had been abused. By prompt and continued measures the life of the woman was saved, and soon after the grateful husband sent to the dispensary with much ado a present of *two taels* in silver. A relative of his, who was the teacher of the foreigner, was much disgusted at the insignificance of the donation, observing that if the concubine had died, it would have cost her husband not less than two thousand taels!

It is a general truth, that while the Chinese seem to be a most secretive race, they are only so in relation to foreigners. Sooner or later, their true *animus* will come out through a chance word

to a gate-keeper or to a coolie. Ingratitude, hypocrisy and double dealing are so much to be expected from the Chinese, that we must not be disappointed if we find these qualities more prominent than they seem to be in other civilized lands. It was not of China that Frederick the Great was speaking, when he said—according to tradition—that he never conferred a favour, that he did not make ninety-nine enemies, and one ungrateful friend. That the Chinese character is very defective at this point, should not be a source of surprise, for, as we shall proceed to show, the basis upon which it rests, is wholly unable to sustain a stable and upright superstructure. No race will be permanently better than its own divinities, and the Chinese are no exception to this inexorable law.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

POLYTHEISM; PANTHEISM; ATHEISM.

VOLUMES have been written upon the religions of China, and upon the religious ideas of the Chinese. Confucianism is now well understood, and both Buddhism and Taoism have been so thoroughly explored that it is hard to believe that anything of first-rate importance is to be discovered. At least one more book upon this topic, however, remains to be composed, or rather to be compiled, namely, a Chinese Mythological Dictionary. Such a work should contain an account of all the principal divinities actually worshipped by the Chinese, with authentic historical notices of such as are historical, together with a record of the steps by which many of them have been promoted in the Chinese pantheon, until, like Kuan Ti, the god of war, from very humble beginnings they have become "adjuvant of heaven." The number of such divinities would probably be seen to be very much less than is ordinarily supposed. Some of them would be perceived to be of purely local importance, and others to be practically national in their influence. Some of them would be found to have been continuously worshipped for more than a millennium, while others have been recently evolved from the ranks of ordinary humanity. Such a manual would prove to be of the highest interest both to the casual traveller, who wished to get an idea of Chinese religious worship as it exists in fact, as distinguished from the theory, and also to the more or less permanent resident, who is often confused by the heterogeneous if not contradictory phenomena of worship in China.

Into the disputed questions connected with the religion of the Chinese we have no intention to enter in any manner whatsoever. Whether the Chinese ever did have a knowledge of one true God is indeed a point of considerable interest. Those who have examined most critically the classical writings of the Chinese

assure us that the weight of scholarship is upon the side of the affirmative. By others who have a claim to an independent judgment, this proposition is altogether denied. To us it seems to be of very much less practical concern than some would make it, and for our present purposes the question may be altogether ignored. What concerns us in our present enquiry is neither a historical nor a theoretical matter, but a practical one, to wit, What is the relation which exists between the Chinese and their divinities?

In speaking of the disregard of foundations on the part of the Chinese, we have already adverted to the singular mixture by which the same individual is at once a Confucianist, a Buddhist, and a Taoist, and with no sense of incongruity. It is in some cases not difficult to trace the stages by which the heroes and worthies of antiquity from being honoured came to be commemorated, and from being merely commemorated came to be worshipped. All the gods of China may be said to have been dead men, and by the rite of ancestral worship it may be affirmed that in a sense all the dead men of China are gods. Temples are constantly erected, by the consent of the Emperor, to men who while living had in various ways distinguished themselves. It is impossible to say that any one of these men may not in the slow evolution of ages rise to the highest place among the national divinities. There can be no doubt whatever that as a nation the Chinese are polytheistic.

That there is a tendency in man toward the worship of nature is a mere truism. The recognition of irresistible and unknown forces leads to their personification and to external acts of adoration, based upon the supposition that these forces are sentient. Thus temples to the gods of wind, thunder, etc., abound. In China the north star is an object of constant worship. There are temples to the sun and to the moon in Peking, in connection with the Imperial worship, but in some regions the worship of the sun is a regular act of routine on the part of the people in general, on a day in the second month, which they designate as his "birthday." Early in the morning the villagers go out to the east to meet the sun, and in the evening they go out toward west to escort him on his way. This ends the worship of the sun for a year.

An exceedingly common manifestation of this nature-worship is in the reverence for trees, which in some provinces (as for example in north-western Honan) is so exceedingly common, that one may pass hundreds of trees of all sizes each of them hung with bannerets, indicating that it is the abode of some spirit. Even when there is no external symbol of worship, the superstition exists in full force. If a fine old tree is seen standing in front of a wretched hovel, it is morally certain that the owner of the tree dare not cut it down, on account of the divinity within.

It is often supposed that the Emperor is the only individual in the Empire who has the prerogative of worshipping heaven. The very singular and interesting ceremonies which are performed in the Temple of Heaven by the Emperor in person are no doubt unique. But it would be news to the people of China as a whole that they do not and must not worship heaven and earth each for themselves. The houses often have a small shrine in the front wall facing the south, and in some regions this is called the shrine to heaven and earth. Multitudes of Chinese will testify that the only act of religious worship which they ever perform (aside from ancestral rites) is a prostration and an offering to heaven and earth on the first and fifteenth of each moon, or in some cases on the beginning of each new year. No prayer is uttered, and after a time the offering is removed, and as in other cases, eaten. What is it that at such times the people worship? Sometimes they affirm that the object of worship is "heaven and earth." Sometimes they say that it is "heaven," and again they call ti "the old man of the sky" *(lao-t'ien-yeh)*. The latter term often leads to an impression that the Chinese do have a real perception of a personal deity. But when it is ascertained that this supposed "person" is frequently matched by another called "grandmother earth" *(ti-mu nai-nai)* the value of the inference is open to serious question. In some places it is customary to offer worship to this "old man of the sky," on the nineteenth of the sixth moon, as that is his "birthday." But among a people who assign a "birthday" to the sun, it is superfluous to enquire who was the father of *lao-t'ien-yeh*, or when he was born, for on matters of this sort there is absolutely no opinion at all. It is difficult to make an ordinary Chinese understand that such questions have any practical bearing. He takes the tradition as he finds it, and never dreams of raising

any enquiries upon this point or any other. We have seldom met any Chinese, who had an intelligible theory with regard to the antecedents or qualities of *lao-t'ien-yeh*, except that he is supposed to regulate the weather, and hence the crops. The wide currency among the Chinese people, of this term, hinting at a personality, to whom however, so far as we know, no temples are erected, and to whom no worship distinct from that to "heaven and earth" is offered, seems to remain thus far unexplained. There is another analogous phenomenon which also invites investigation. This is the existence in China of tablets inscribed to the "True Ruler of Heaven and Earth, the Three Boundaries, the Ten Directions, and the Ten Thousand Spirits," *(T'ien-ti, san-chieh, shih-fang, wan-ling, chen-tsai).* Sometimes these tablets are found in small brick shrines without any image. In some places these characters are stamped upon pictures of "All-the-gods" *(tung-shen,* or *ch'üan-shen).* In districts where these "heaven and earth tablets" are current, they are bought by the people toward the close of the year, like a kitchen-god, worshipped until the fifteenth of the first moon, and then burned. The only explanation of the matter which we happen to have heard, was given by certain Roman Catholic Chinese. They affirm that this tablet was introduced into China in the Chin dynasty, from Persia, by teachers who called their instruction "The Ten-character Doctrine." The separate phrases of which the inscription is composed, have been traced in different works of Chinese literature, from the very ancient time downward. The combination of these phrases would seem to lead naturally to monotheistic conceptions. But Chinese religions have such an unbounded capacity of absorption, that, as we have seen, the practical result appears to be simply to add one more to the already sufficiently numerous expressions denoting a power wholly vague and indefinite.

The word "heaven" is often used in the Chinese classics in such a way as to convey the idea of personality and will. But it is likewise employed in a manner which suggests very little of either, and when we read in the commentary that "heaven is a principle," we feel that the vagueness of the term is at its maximum. To this ambiguity in classical use corresponds the looseness of meaning given to it in every-day life. The man who has been worshipping heaven, upon being pressed to know what

he means by "heaven," will frequently reply that it is the blue expanse above. His worship is therefore in harmony with that of him who worships the powers of nature, either individually or collectively. His creed may be described in Emersonian phrase as "one with the blowing clover and the falling rain." In other words, he is a pantheist. *This lack of any definite sense of personality is a fatal flaw in the Chinese worship of "heaven."*

The polytheism and pantheism of the lower classes of Chinese are matched in the upper classes, by what appears to be pure atheism. Upon this point we are not prepared to speak with the same confidence, as in regard to the prevalence of polytheism and pantheism, for the reason that opportunities for a satisfactory estimate of what the condition of mind of the relatively higher classes of China really is, have not fallen to our lot. But from the testimony of those who know most on this point, from the abundant surface indications, and from antecedent probability, we have no difficulty in concluding that there never was on this earth a body of educated and cultivated men so thoroughly agnostic and atheistic as the mass of Confucian scholars.* The phrase "antecedent probability" refers to the known influence which has been exerted over the *literati* of China by the materialistic commentators of the Sung dynasty. The influence of Chu Hsi, the learned expounder of the Chinese Classics, has been so overwhelming, that to question any of his views has long been regarded as heresy. The effect has been to overlay the teachings of the Classics with an interpretation which is not only materialistic, but which, so far as we understand it, is totally atheistic.

After the Yellow River emerges from the mountains of Shansi and Shensi, it continues its way for hundreds of miles to the sea. In successive ages it has taken many different routes, ranging through six or seven degrees of latitude, from the mouth of the Yangtze-kiang, to that of the Peiho. But wherever it has flowed, it has carried ruin, and has left behind it a barren waste of sand. Not unlike this has been the materialistic current introduced by

* Mr. Meadows remarks that every consistent Confucianist ought to be a blank atheist, but as human nature is seldom ideally self-consistent, many Confucianists either believe in the gods, or think that they do so.

the commentators of the Sung dynasty into the stream of Chinese thought, a current which having flowed unchecked for seven centuries, has left behind it a moral waste of atheistic sand, incapable of supporting the spiritual life of a nation. Taoism has degenerated into a system of incantations against evil spirits. It has largely borrowed from Buddhism, to supplement its own innate deficiencies. Buddhism was itself introduced to provide for those inherent wants in the nature of man, which Confucianism did little or nothing to satisfy. Each of these forms of instruction has been greatly modified by the others, and as at present found in China, they may be likened to three serpents. The first serpent swallowed the second up to its head, beyond which it could not go. The second serpent in like manner swallowed the third to the same extent. But the third serpent having a mouth of indefinite capacity, reached around and finding the tail of the first, also swallowed this serpent up to its head, leaving only three heads visible, and an exceedingly intimate union between all three of the bodies! Buddhism swallowed Taoism, Taoism swallowed Confucianism, but at last the latter swallowed both Buddhism and Taoism together, and thus "the three religions are one!"

The practical relation of the Chinese to their "three religions" may be illustrated by the relations of an Anglo-Saxon to the materials of which his language is composed. "Saxon and Norman and Dane are we," but even were it possible to determine our remote origin, the choice of our words would not be influenced in the smallest degree by the extent to which we may happen to have Saxon or Norman blood in our veins. Our selection of words will be determined by our mental habits, and by the use to which we wish to put the words. The scholar will use many Latin words, with liberal admixture of the Norman, while the farmer will use mostly plain Saxon terms. But in either case the Saxon is the base, to which the other stocks are but additions. In China Confucianism is the base, and all Chinese are Confucianists, as all English are Saxons. To what extent Buddhist or Taoist ideas, phraseology and practices may be superimposed upon this base, will be determined by circumstances. But to the Chinese there is no more incongruity or contradiction in the combination of the "three religions" in one ceremony, than there is to our

thought in the interweaving of words of diverse national origin in the same sentence.*

A curious example of the Confucian way of looking at the other "religions" of China is found in the chapter on "Heresies" of the Sacred Edicts composed by Emperor K'ang Hsi, and annotated by Yung Cheng. The antiquity of all three religions is clearly pointed out; but Chu Hsi is quoted against the doctrines of the Buddhists and of the Taoists, in a way which might imply the entire condemnation of those sects. Yet in the commentary the language is such, that one might infer that after all it is not the doctrines of the real Buddhists and the real Taoists to which exception is taken, but to the abuse of those doctrines by designing priests for their own ends. There is no indication that the question whether these doctrines are or are not *true*, was in the mind of the writers at all. They simply recognize the doctrines as in existence, and point out the inexpediency of allowing men and women to assemble promiscuously to burn incense, and for other alleged purposes. In the mandarin expansion of the Sacred Edicts, which is said to be the work of a noted salt commissioner named Wang Yu-po, these objections are developed at great length, and by a writer who was evidently bitterly hostile to Buddhism and to Taoism. The practice of taking one of the sons of a family, and making him into a Buddhist priest, to the extinction of his natural relations to his parents, excites the fierce anger of the Confucianists. Some of the Chinese "virtue books" containing lists of virtuous deeds for which merit marks are allowed, assign a hundred such marks to the woman who never in her life goes once to a temple to burn incense. These "virtue books" have been hereinbefore alluded to, and deserve a fuller consideration than we have space to give. The following quotation from Miss Fielde's *Pagoda Shadows* will illustrate the practical ethics and sincerity of these so-called

* The Chinese habit of considering things which are practically different, as "the same in principle" *(i ko li)*, leads to many strange results. A Chinese colporteur was selling books at a large fair, and among the rest, Dr. Milne's tract entitled *The Two Friends*, in which a man surnamed "Chang" is introduced as conversing with another styled "Yuan," their conversation being of the most easily intelligible description. A reading man who bought one of these books expressed his approval of it, and remarked that he supposed that this "Chang" was the same as "Chang T'ien-shih" (a Chinese Taoist born about thirty years before Christ); and that "Yuan" was "Yuan T'ien-kang" (who is said to have lived about A.D. 600)!

"Exhortations to Morality:"—"One of these books, which was given to me by a native tract-distributor, has a preface which says if this book be carried in a boat, the wind will be favourable, and the waves will not be high; if kept on the person of the traveller, he will meet no robbers, and though he walk a thousand miles he will feel neither heat, cold, nor thirst; if laid up in a house, the demons will all withdraw from the dwelling; if read by a woman, she will bear five sons and two daughters; if read by a man he will attain a literary degree; and all who ponder it carefully, will have the length of life doubled. After these series of falsehoods, the book proceeds to exhort its readers to practice truthfulness, and other virtues."

It is always difficult to make a Chinese perceive that two forms of belief are mutually exclusive. He knows nothing about logical contradictories, and cares even less. He has learned by instinct the art of reconciling propositions which are inherently irreconcilable, by violently affirming each of them, paying no heed whatever to their mutual relations. He is thus prepared by all his intellectual training to allow the most incongruous forms of belief to unite, as fluids mingle by endosmosis and exosmosis. He has carried "intellectual hospitality" to the point of logical suicide, but he does not know it, and cannot be made to understand it, when he is told.

Two results of this mechanical union of creeds are very noteworthy. The first is the violence done to the innate instinct of order, an instinct for which the Chinese are especially distinguished, which is conspicuously displayed in the elaborate machinery of the carefully graded ranks of officials, from the first to the ninth, each marked by its own badge, and having its own special limitations. Something analogous to this might certainly have been looked for in the Chinese pantheon, but nothing of the sort is found. It is vain to enquire of a Chinese which divinity is supposed to be the greater, Yü Huang, or Buddha. Even in the "Temple-to-all-the-gods," the order is merely arbitrary and accidental, and subject to constant variations. There is no regular graduation of authority in the spirit world of the Chinese, but such utter confusion as if found on earth would be equivalent to chronic anarchy. This state of things is seen in a still more conspicuous manner in the "Halls of the Three Religions." *(San Chiao Tang),*

where the images of Confucius, of Buddha, and of Laotze are displayed in a close harmony. The post of honour is in the centre, and this we should expect to be conceded to Confucius, or if not to him—since he made no claim of any kind to divinity —then to Laotze. There is good reason to think that this question of precedence has been in bygone days the occasion of acrimonious disputes, but in nearly all the instances of which we happen to have heard, it has been settled in favour of Buddha, albeit a foreigner!

Another significant result of the union of all beliefs in China, is the debasement of man's moral nature to the lowest level found in any of the creeds. This is in accordance with a law, akin to that by which a baser currency invariably displaces that which is better. All the lofty maxims of Confucianism have been wholly ineffective in guarding the Confucianists from fear of the goblins and devils which figure so largely in Taoism. It has often been remarked, and with every appearance of truth, that there is no other civilized nation in existence which is under such bondage to superstition and credulity as the Chinese. Wealthy merchants and learned scholars are not ashamed to be seen on the two days of the month set apart for that purpose, worshipping the fox, the weasel, the hedgehog, the snake, and the rat, all of which in printed placards are styled "Their Excellencies," and are thought to have an important effect on human destiny. It is not many years since the most prominent statesman in China fell on his knees before a water-snake which some one had been pleased to represent as an embodiment of Lung Wang, the god of floods, himself supposed to be the incarnation of an official of a former dynasty, whose success in dealing with brimming rivers was held to be miraculous. This habit of worshipping a snake, alleged to be a Lung Wang, or a Tai Wang, whenever floods devastate China, appears to be a general one. In districts at a distance from a river, any ordinary land serpent will pass as a Tai Wang, and "no questions asked." If the waters subside, extensive theatrical performances may be held in honour of the god who has granted this boon, to wit the snake, which is placed on a tray in a temple or other public place for the purpose. The district magistrate, and all other officers go there every day to prostrate themselves and to burn incense to the divinity. In a case of this kind, in the

sub-prefecture of Kao-t'ang in Shantung, occurring during the great floods of 1890, a small serpent said to have been found hanging from the city wall, was announced as the Tai Wang, and was worshipped with nine days of theatricals, and by all the city officials. Immense quantities of paper were burned in his honour, and as the paper was placed on the tray in which the Tai Wang was confined, the unfortunate divinity was either smothered, or starved, and at the end of his ceremonial was found to be quite dead! It was then given out that he had gone to visit the Emperor, and the corpse of the late Tai Wang was escorted to the river in an elegant official sedan chair. This Lung Wang is generally regarded as the rain-god, in regions adjacent to waterways, but at a little distance in the interior, the god of war, Kuan Ti, is much more likely to be worshipped for the same purpose, but sometimes both are supplanted by the Kuan Yin P'usa or goddess of mercy. To a Chinese this does not seem at all irrational, for his mind is free from all presumptions as to the unity of nature, and it is very hard for him to appreciate the absurdity, even when it is demonstrated to him.

In connection with these prayers for rain, another curious and most significant fact has often been brought to our notice. In the famous Chinese novel called the *Travels to the West*, one of the principal characters was originally a monkey hatched from a stone, and by slow degrees of evolution developed into a man. In some places this imaginary being is worshipped as a rain god, to the exclusion of both Lung Wang and Kuan Ti. No instance could put in a clearer light than this the total lack in China of any dividing line between the real and the fictitious. To a Western mind, causes and effects are correlative. What may be the intuitions of cause and effect in the mind of a Chinese who prays to a non-existent monkey to induce a fall of rain, we are not able to conjecture.

The gods of the Chinese being of this heterogeneous description, it is of importance to enquire what the Chinese do with them. To this question there are two answers, they worship them, and they neglect them. It is not very uncommon to meet with estimates of the amount which the whole Chinese nation expends for incense, paper money, etc., in the course of a year. Such estimates are of course based upon a calculation of the

apparent facts in some special district, which is taken as a unit, and then used as a multiplier for all the other districts of the Empire. Nothing can be more precarious than so-called "statistics" of this sort, which have literally no more validity than that census of a cloud of mosquitoes which was taken by a man who "counted until he was tired, and then estimated."

As we have already had repeated occasion to point out, there is very little which one can be safe in predicating of the Chinese Empire as a whole. Of this truth the worship in Chinese temples is a conspicuous example. The traveller who lands in Canton, and who preceives the clouds of smoke arising from the incessant offerings to the divinities most popular there, will conclude that the Chinese are among the most idolatrous people in the world. But let him restrain his judgment until he has visited the other end of the Empire, and he will find multitudes of the temples neglected, absolutely unvisited except on the first and fifteenth of the moon, in many cases not then, and perhaps not even at New-Year, when, if ever, the Chinese instinct of worship prevails. He will find hundreds of thousands of temples, the remote origin of which is totally lost in antiquity, and which are occasionally repaired, but of which the people can give no account, and for which they have no regard. He will find hundreds of square miles of populous territory, in which there is to be seen scarcely a single priest either Taoist or Buddhist. In these regions he will generally find no women in the temples, and the children allowed to grow up without the smallest instruction as to the necessity of propitiating the gods. In other parts of China, the condition of things is totally different, and the external rites of idolatry are interwoven into the smallest details of the life of each separate day.

The religious forces of Chinese society may be compared to the volcanic forces which have built up the Hawaiian Islands. In the most northern and western members of the group, the volcanoes have for ages been extinct, and their sites marked only by broken-down crater-pits now covered with luxuriant vegetation. But on the south-eastern member of the group, the fires are still in active operation, and continue at intervals to shake the island from centre to circumference. In some of the oldest parts of China there is the least attention paid to temple worship, and in some of the provinces which at the time of China's greatest glory

were wild and barbarous regions, idolatry is most flourishing. But it is easy to be misled by surface indications such as these. It is quite possible that they may pass for more than they are worth, and before well grounded inferences can be safely drawn the subject requires much fuller investigation than it has as yet received.

To "reverence the gods, but to keep at a distance from then," was the advice of Confucius. It is not strange, therefore, that his followers at the present day, consider *respectful neglect* to be the most prudent treatment for the multitudinous and incongruous divinities in the Chinese pantheon. When contrasted with the Mongols or the Japanese, the Chinese people are felt to be comparatively free from the bias of religion. It is common to see over the doors of temples the classical expression, "Worship the gods as if they were present." The popular instinct has taken at its true value the uncertainty conveyed in the words "as if," and has embodied them in current sayings which accurately express the state of mind of the mass of the people:

"Worship the gods as if they came, *but if you don't, it's all the same.*"

"Worship the gods as if the gods were there, *but if you worship not, the gods don't care.*"

One step beyond respectful neglect of the gods, is *ceremonial reverence*, which consists in performing a certain routine in a certain way, with no other thought than that of securing certain external results by so doing.

The idea of solemnity appears to be foreign to the Chinese mind. We do not know how to speak of it, without expressing an idea of what is merely docorum. *All Chinese worship of Chinese divinities, of which we have ever been cognizant, has appeared to be either routine ceremonial, or else a mere matter of barter; so much worship for so much benefit.* When *lao-t'ien-yeh* is spoken of as a being, and to be reverenced, the uniform presentation of this aspect, to the exclusion of all others, shows in a most decisive manner what the worship really is. "Because we have our food and clothes from him," is the reply, when a Chinese is asked why he makes periodical *k'o-t'ous* to this "person." Even when the individual has no definite opinions as to the real existence of such a being, this does not prevent his conformity to the rite. The

ancients did so, and he does as they did. Whether it is of any use, "who knows?"

The gods are worshipped, just as in Western lands an insurance policy is taken out, because it is the safer way. "It is better to believe that the gods exist," says the popular saying, "than to believe that they do not exist;" that is, if they do not exist at all, there is no harm done, whereas if they do exist, and are neglected, they may be angry and revengeful. The gods are supposed to be actuated by the motives which are known to actuate men. It is a proverb that one who has a sheep's head (for a temple offering) can get whatever he desires, and also that those divinities, such as the "Three Pure Ones," who have nothing special to bestow, will always be poor, while the goddess of mercy, and the god of war, will be the ones honoured and enriched. Not only do the Chinese base the argument for the worship of the gods, upon the strictly hypothetical foundation, "It can do no harm, and it may do some good," but they go a step farther into a region where it is totally impossible for an Occidental mind to follow them. They often say and appear to think, "If you believe in them, then there really are gods; *but if you do not believe in them, then there are none!*" This mode of speech (a mode of thought it can scarcely be called) resembles that of a Chinese who should say, "If you believe in the Emperor then there is one; but if you do not believe in one, then there is no Emperor." When this analogy is pointed out, the Chinese are ready enough to admit it, but they do not appear to perceive it for themselves by any necessary process. There are many Chinese worshippers who are to be seen making a prostration at every step, sometimes occupying very long periods of time, in going on tedious and difficult pilgrimages. When asked what is their motive for submitting to these austerities, they will tell us that as there is so much false worship of the gods, it is necessary for them to demonstrate that their hearts are sincere by these laborious means. Whatever may be said in regard to such exceptional instances, we have no hesitation in affirming that all that has been hereinbefore said of the absence of sincerity among the Chinese, in their relations to each other, applies with even greater force to much of their worship. The photograph of a group of priests belonging to a temple near Peking is a perfect masterpiece in the representation

of serpentine cunning. Men who have such faces, live lives to correspond with their faces.

It is as true of the Chinese, as it has been of other nations in heathenism, that they have conceived of their gods as altogether such as they are themselves, and not without reason, for many of the gods are the countrymen of those who worship them. Human beings are supposed to be surrounded by a cloud of spirits, powerful for evil, but subject to bribes, flattery, cajolery, and liable to be cheated. A Chinese is anxious to take advantage of the man with whom he makes a bargain, and he is not less anxious to take advantage—if he can—of the god with whom he makes a bargain, in other words, the god to whom he prays. Perhaps he purchases felicity by subscribing toward the repair of a temple, but he not improbably has his subscription of two hundred and fifty cash registered as a thousand. The god will take the account as it stands. While the temple is in process of repair, a piece of red paper is perhaps pasted over the eyes of each god, that he may not see the confusion by which he is surrounded, and which is not considered respectful. If the temple is situated at the outskirts of a village, and is in too frequent use by thieves as a place in which to divide their booty, the door may be almost or even altogether bricked up, and the god left to communicate with the universe as best he can.

The familiar case of the kitchen god, who ascends to heaven at the end of the year, to make his report of the behaviour of the family, but whose lips are first smeared with glutinous candy to prevent his reporting the bad deeds which he has seen, is a typical instance of a Chinese outwitting his celestial superiors. In the same way a boy is sometimes called by a girl's name, to make the unintelligent evil spirits think that he *is* a girl, in order to secure his lease of life. Mr. Baber speaks of the murder of female infants in Szechuan, whose spirits are subsequently appeased by mock money which is burned, that it may be conveyed to them for their expenses! The temples to the goddess who bestows children, unlike most other temples, are often frequented by women. Some of these temples are provided with many little clay images of male children, some in the arms of their patron goddess, and others disposed like goods on a shelf. It is the practice of Chinese women, on visiting these temples, to break off the parts which

distinguish the sex of the child, and eat them, so as to insure the birth of a son. In case there are large numbers of little images, as just mentioned, it is with a view to the accommodation of the women who frequent the temple, each of whom will take an image, *but it must be stolen and not openly carried off.* In case the desired child is born, the woman is expected to show her gratitude by returning two other images in the place of those which she stole! Chinese sailors suppose that the dreaded typhoons of the China seas are caused by malignant spirits, which lie in wait to catch the junks as they navigate the dangerous waters. When the storm reaches a pitch of extreme violence, it is said that it is the habit of the mariners to have a paper junk made of the exact pattern of their own, and complete in all its details. This paper junk is then cast into the sea, at the point of maximum disturbance, in order that the angry water spirits may be deceived into thinking that this is the vessel of which they are in quest, and thus allow the real one to escape!

In one case of which we happened to be cognizant, where a village decided to remove the gods from a temple, and use it for a school-house, they had hoped to pay a considerable proportion of the expenses of the alterations by the "silver" to be extracted from the hearts of the late gods. But the simple-minded rustics were not familiar with the ways of Chinese gods, and of those who make them, who are like unto them. For when they came to search for the precious hearts, they were not found right, but consisted simply of lumps of pewter! Cases no doubt occur in which the priests do conceal treasures in the images of their gods, and they are matched by corresponding cases in which the temples are robbed, and the gods either carried off bodily, or pulverized on the spot. Violent treatment of Chinese divinities on the part of those who might be expected to worship them, is by no mean unknown. We have heard of an instance in which a district magistrate tried a case which involved a priest, and by implication the Buddha which was the occupant of the temple. This god was summoned to appear before the magistrate and told to kneel, which he failed to do, whereupon the magistrate ordered him to be beaten five hundred blows, by which time the god was reduced to a heap of dust, and judgment was pronounced against him by default.

There is a story of a member of the community of Friends, who was struck on the face by an angry man, to whom the Quaker immediately turned "the other cheek also," which was treated in the same manner. Upon this the old gentleman remarked to his assailant: "Having complied with the Scripture injunction, I now proceed to administer to thee a little wholesome correction," which introduction he followed by a sound beating of his injudicious opponent. One is reminded of this incident nearly every year during the season when petitions are incessantly put up to the rain god, to exert his powers on the parched earth, which cannot be planted until there is a rainfall. After prayers have been long continued, with no result, it is common for the villagers to administer "a little wholesome correction," by dragging the image of Kuan Ti out of his temple and setting him down in the hottest place to be found, that he may know what the condition of the atmosphere really is at first hand, and not by hearsay only. The habit of exhibiting undisguised dissatisfaction with the behaviour of the gods, is referred to in the current saying. "If you do not mend the roof of your house in the third or fourth moon, you will be reviling Lung Wang in the fifth moon, or the sixth."

We have heard of an instance in which the people of a large city in China, having been visited by an epidemic of great severity, decided that this was owing to the malevolent influence of a particular divinity of the district. Banding themselves together, precisely as if the god was a living bully, they set upon him, and reduced him to his original elements. Of the accuracy of this narrative we have no proofs, except its currency, but that appears to be sufficient in itself. The whole proceeding is not inconsistent with the "Chinese notions about gods and spirits."

In view of facts such as those to which we have been directing the reader's attention, it might be most natural for one who was not familiar with the Chinese character, to draw the inference that it cannot be possible that the Chinese have any religion at all. This statement has indeed been often made in explicit language. In Mr. Meadows' work on *The Chinese and their Rebellions*, he quotes some of the too sweeping generalizations of M. Huc, only to denounce them, affirming them to be "baseless calumny of the higher life of a great portion of the human race." Mr. Meadows is ready enough to admit that the Chinese are not

attracted, either to the bare results of centuries of doctrinal disputes, or to the conduct of the nations which accept those results as their creed, but emphatically denies the assertion that the Chinese have "no longing for immortality, no cordial admiration of what is good and great, no unswerving and unshrinking devotion to those who have been good and great, no craving, no yearning of the soul to reverence something high and holy." Sir Thomas Wade, on the other hand, whose long familiarity with China and the Chinese might be supposed to entitle him to speak with authority on so plain a question, as whether the Chinese have or have not a religion, has recently published his opinion as follows:—"If religion is held to mean more than mere ethics, I deny that the Chinese have a religion. They have indeed a cult, or rather a mixture of cults, but no creed; innumerable varieties of puerile idolatry, at which they are ready enough to laugh, but which they dare not disregard."

Into the interesting and by no means easily answered question here raised, we do not feel required or indeed competent to enter. It would be easy to discuss it at great length, but we are not certain that any light would be thrown upon it. In our view there is a practical method of approaching the matter, which will serve our purpose much better than abstract discussion. Taoism and Buddhism have greatly affected the Chinese, but the Chinese are not Taoists as such, neither are they Buddhists. They are Confucianists, and whatever may be added to their faith, or whatever may be taken away by the other systems of thought, the Chinese always remain Confucianists. We began by remarking that Confucianism is now well understood, and we shall close by endeavouring to show in what respects it comes short of being a religion such as the Chinese ought to have. In order to do this, we shall quote the language of a distinguished Chinese scholar, whose conclusions cannot be lightly set aside. At the end of his *Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius*, Dr. Ernst Faber devotes a section to *The Defects and Errors of Confucianism*, which are set forth, while at the same time it is acknowledged that there is in Confucianism much that is excellent concerning the relations of man, and many points in which the doctrines of Christian revelation are almost echoed. We quote the four-and-twenty points specified, adding here and there a few words of comment.

1. "Confucianism recognizes no relation to a living god."

2. "There is no distinction made between the human soul and the body, nor is there any clear definition of man, either from a physical or from a physiological point of view."

The absence of any clear doctrine as to the soul of man is very perplexing to the foreign student of Confucianism. The ultimate outcome of its teaching, in the case of many of the common people, is that they know nothing about any soul at all, except in the sense of animal vitality. When a man dies, there is classical authority for the statement that his "soul" *(hun)* goes upward toward heaven, and his "animal soul" *(p'o)* goes into the earth. But a simpler theory is that so constantly advanced, and which is entirely harmonious with the agnostic materialism of the true Confucianist, that "the soul" or breath *(c'hi)* dissolves into the air, and the flesh into the dust. As we have elsewhere remarked, it is frequently quite impossible to interest a Chinese in the question whether he has three souls, one soul or no soul at all. To him the elucidation of such a matter is invested with the same kind and degree of interest, which he would feel in learning which particular muscles of the body produce the movement of the organ concerned in eating. As long as the process is allowed to go on with comfort, he does not care in the smallest degree by what name the anatomist designates the muscular fibres which assist the result. In like manner as long as the Chinese has enough to do to look after the interest of his digestive apparatus, and that of those who are dependent upon him, he is very likely to care nothing either about his "souls" (if he has any) or about theirs, unless it can be shown that the matter is in some way connected with the price of grain.

3. "There is no explanation given, why it is that some men are born as saints, others as ordinary mortals."

4. "All men are said to possess the disposition and strength necessary for the attainment of moral perfection *(chün-tzu)*, but the contrast with the actual state remains unexplained."

5. "There is wanting in Confucianism a decided and serious tone in its treatment of the doctrine of sin, for, with the exception of moral retribution in social life, it mentions no punishment for sin."

6. "Confucianism is generally devoid of a deeper insight into sin and evil."

7. "Confucianism finds it therefore impossible to explain death."

8. "Confucianism knows no mediator, none that could restore original nature in accordance with the ideal which man finds in himself."

9. "Prayer and its ethical power find no place in the system of Confucius."

10. "Though confidence *(hsin)* is indeed frequently insisted upon, its presupposition, truthfulness in speaking, is never practically urged, but rather the reverse."

In speaking of Chinese lack of sincerity, we have already adverted to the question as to the truthfulness of Chinese historians. It is important to bear in mind that not only is the teaching of Confucianism greatly defective in the particular noted, but the practice of the great Master himself is not such as to commend historical fidelity. Dr. Legge who does not lay much stress on "certain charges which have been made from unimportant incidents in the sage's career," attaches great importance to the manner in which Confucius handled his materials in the "Spring and Autumn Annals," which contains the record of the kingdom of Lu, for two hundred and forty-two years, down to within two years of Confucius' death. The following paragraphs are taken from Dr. Legge's lecture on Confucianism, published in his volume on *The Religions of China.* "Mencius regarded the *Ch'un Ch'iu* as the greatest of the Master's achievements, and says that its appearance struck terror into rebellious ministers and unfilial sons. The author himself had a similar opinion of it, and said that it was from it men would know him, and also (some of them) condemn him. Was his own heart misgiving him, when he thus spoke of men condemning him for the *Ch'un Ch'iu?* The fact is that the annals are astonishingly meagre, and not only so, but evasive and deceptive. 'The *Ch'un Ch'iu,*' says Kung Yang who commented on it, and supplemented it within a century after its composition 'conceals [the truth] out of regard to the high in rank, to kinship, and to men of worth.' And I have shown in the fifth volume of my Chinese Classics that this 'concealing' covers all the ground embraced in our three English words—ignoring, concealing, and misrepresenting. What shall we say to these things? * * * * I often wish that I could cut the

knot by denying the genuineness and authenticity of the 'Spring and Autumn' as we now have it; but the chain of evidence that binds it to the hand and pencil of Confucius in the close of his life, is very strong. And if a foreign student take so violent a method to enable him to look at the character of the philosopher without this flaw of historical untruthfulness, the governors of China and the majority of its scholars will have no sympathy with him, and no compassion for his mental distress. Truthfulness was one of the subject that Confucius often insisted on with his disciples; but the *Ch'un Ch'iu* has led his countrymen to conceal the truth from themselves and others, wherever they think it would injuriously affect the reputation of the Empire, or of its sages."

We have repeatedly referred to the Sacred Edicts of K'ang Hsi. The intimate relations which subsisted between this monarch and the Roman Catholic fathers of his time is well-known. According to the Catholic historians, there seems every reason to suppose that K'ang Hsi himself was not only most favourably disposed toward their doctrine, but was ready enough to admit their truth. The fathers entertained high hopes of his conversion, and of the Christianisation of the Chinese Empire through him, as the Roman Empire was Christianised under Constantine. The Emperor wrote with his own hand the memorials which the fathers were to present to him, to ensure faultlessness of style and literary finish. He composed anthitetical couplets for their Christian chapels, in which the language used is of the most elevating and orthodox Christian character. These couplets have been copied all over the Empire and their authorship is well-known. Yet in the chapter of the Sacred Edict referring to "heresies," His Majesty, after pulverizing the Buddhists and Taoists, extinguishes the "Men of the West," by comparing them to the treasonable "White Lily Society" *(Pai Lien Chiao)*, and declares the worship of the "Lord of Heaven" to "heretical" *(pu-ching)*, and explains to the people that the only reason for the employment of such persons, was because they had skill in making almanacs.

11. "Polygamy is presupposed and tolerated."

12. "Polytheism is sanctioned."

13. "Fortune-telling, choosing of days, omens, dreams and other illusions (phœnixes, etc.) are believed in."

14. "Ethics are confounded with external ceremonies, and a precise despotic political form." It is impossible for those who are not intimately acquainted with the Chinese to comprehend how much is connoted in the simple expression, "Ethics are confounded with external ceremonies." Frequently as this subject has been already referred to, we have come far short of doing it justice. In all the relations of Chinese life, what is wanted is conformity to a rule, but it is an outer and not an inner conformity which is required. There is a story of a man who being told by his wife that there was nothing to eat in the house, replied that they would then fry the gold-fish and roast the canary-bird, so as to "go through the motions" of eating. One is reminded of this on seeing an acre or two of ground once covered with spacious temples, reduced to a miscellaneous waste of broken brickbats, out of a few of which one or two trifling shrines have been constructed. In one instance the writer saw a small brick shrine built on the flat top of an old stump. When one enquires of what use are the superabundant travesties of reality in Chinese popular worship, the almost certain reply is forthcoming, "It is the way to do it" *(chiu-shih-na-ma-ko-shih)*. If in Chinese literature one strikes a specially fine sentiment, and asks an intelligent Chinese teacher if this is the basis of Chinese action, he is met by the cordial and smiling answer, "That is the way we talk about it" *(chiu-shih-na-ma-shuo)*. After all due allowances are made, it is frequently difficult to struggle against the conviction that the true signature for the Chinese national flag ought to be the motto, *Yu-ch'i-ming, wu-ch'i-shih*. "The Name, but not the Reality."

15. "The position which Confucius assumed toward ancient institutions is a capricious one."

16. "The assertion that certain musical melodies influence the morals of the people is ridiculous."

17. "The influence of mere good example is exaggerated, and Confucius himself proves it most of all." If it be true as Confucian ethics claim, that the prince is the vessel as the people are the water; that when the cup is round the water will be round, and when the dish is flat the water will be flat, it seems hard to explain how the great men of China have not exerted a stronger influence in the way of modifying the character of those who study their lives. If example is really so powerful as Confucianists

represent, how does it happen that as seen in its effects it is so comparatively inert? The virtual deification of the "superior man" as mentioned below under No. 20, is matched by the entire absence of any mediator, as already pointed out under No. 8. No matter how "superior" the Sage may be, he is obliged to confine himself to giving good advice. If the advice is not taken, he not only cannot help it, but there is no further advice given.

To us, that has always appeared to be a singularly suggestive passage in which Confucius said, "I do not open up the truth to one who is not eager to get knowledge, nor help out any one who is not anxious to explain himself. *When I have presented one corner of a subject to any one, and he cannot from it learn the other three, I do not repeat the lesson.*" The advice which he gives is for superior men only. Such advice is excellent, but it is by no means a prophylactic. When it has failed to act as such, then what is wanted is a restorative. It is idle to stand over the traveller who, having fallen among thieves, is stripped and wounded, and to discourse to him of the importance of joining friendly caravans, of the unadvisability of sustaining serious lesions of the tissues, by which much blood is likely to be lost and the nervous centres injured. The wounded man, already faint from loss of blood, knows all that, indeed he knew it all the while. What he needs now is not restrospective lectures on the consequences of violating natural laws, but oil, wine, a place of refuge for a possible recovery, and above all *a wise and helpful friend.* For the physically disabled Confucianism may at times do something; for the morally and spiritually wounded it does and can do nothing.

18. "In Confucianism the system of social life is tyranny. Women are slaves. Children have no rights in relation to their parents, whilst subjects are placed in the position of children with regard to their superiors."

The real position of any class of people may be learned by an examination of their ideals. One of the native Chinese newspapers a short time ago contained a notice of a young woman whose parents had betrothed her to a youth who turned out to be a profligate, and who squandered what little substance he had in rioting and debauchery. The parents of the girl desired to break

off the engagement, but this would have been impossible if the young man had not waxed indignant and voluntarily returned the engagement papers. The parents of the girl were about to arrange for a more eligible match when the girl, becoming aware of what was going on, burst into tears, declaring that she had been betrothed to the young man, and would either be his wife if alive or his spirit consort if dead, and would under no circumstances have another husband. When her parents refused to listen to her entreaties, she hanged herself at night by a strip of cotton cloth. The comment of the native paper is significant, "Such heroic fidelity and devotion are deservedly worthy of commendation and esteem." This young woman was a thorough-going Confucianist; her parents were only Confucianists in part. Cases of similar behaviour on the part of Chinese girls do not appear to be uncommon.

19. "Filial piety is exaggerated into deification of parents."

20. "The net result of Confucius' system, as drawn by himself, is the worship of genius, *i.e.*, deification of man."

21. "There is with the exception of ancestral worship, which is void of any true ethical value, no clear conception of the dogma of immortality."

22. "All rewards are expected in this world, so that egotism is unconsciously fostered, and if not avarice, at least ambition." The open avowal of a selfish motive in all acts of merit sometimes leads to curious results. In the month of April, 1889, the prefect of Hangchow attempted to raise funds for the sufferers from the Yellow River floods, by levying a tax on each cup of tea sold in the tea-houses of that great city. To the enlightened people of that ancient capital this assessment presented itself in a light similar to that in which the Bostonians of 1773 regarded the tea tax of their day. The prefect endeavoured to win the people over by a proclamation, in which they were informed that "happiness was sure to be their reward, if they cheerfully contributed to so excellent a cause". The people, however, boycotted the tea-shops, and were in the end entirely victorious. It is not every day that we are treated to the spectacle of a city-full of people banded together to resist compulsory "happiness!"

23. "The whole system of Confucianism offers no comfort to ordinary mortals, either in life or in death."

24. "The history of China shows that Confucianism is incapable of effecting for the people a new birth to a higher life and nobler efforts, and Confucianism is now in practical life quite alloyed with Shamanistic and Buddhistic ideas and practices."

Of the strange intermixture of different forms of faith in China we have already spoken. That neither Confucianism nor either of its co-religions is capable of "effecting for the people a new birth to a higher life, and nobler efforts," is well recognized by the Chinese themselves. This is strikingly shown in one of their fables, the literary authorship of which we have not ascertained.

According to this account, Confucius, Laotze and Buddha met one day in the land of the Immortals, and were lamenting the fact that in those degenerate times their excellent doctrines did not seem to make any headway in the Central Empire. After prolonged discussion, it was agreed that the reason must be that while the doctrines themselves are recognized as admirable, human nature is inadequate to live up to them without a constant model. It was accordingly decided that each of the founders of these schools of instruction should materialise himself, go down to earth, and try to find some one who could do what it was so necessary to have done. This plan was at once carried into effect, and in process of time, while wandering about the earth, Confucius came on an old man of venerable appearance, who however did not rise at the approach of the sage, but inviting the latter to be seated, he soon engaged him in a conversation on the doctrines of antiquity, and the degree to which they were at that time neglected in practice. In his discourse the old man shewed such profound acquaintance with the tenets of the ancients, and displayed such vast penetration of judgment that Confucius was greatly delighted, and after a long interview retired. But even when the sage took his leave, the old man did not rise. Having found Laotze and Buddha, who had been altogether unsuccessful in their search, Confucius related to them his adventure, and recommended that each of them should in turn visit the sitting philosopher, and ascertain whether he was as well versed in their doctrines as in those of Confucius. To his unmixed delight, Laotze found the old man to be almost as familiar with the tenets of Taoism as its founder, and a model of eloquence and fervour. Like Confucius

Laotze was struck by the fact that although maintaining a most respectful attitude the old man did not rise from his place. It was now the turn of Buddha, who met with the same surprising and gratifying success. The old man still did not rise, but he exhibited an insight into the inner meaning of Buddhism, such as had not been seen for ages.

When the three founders of religion met to consult, they were unanimously of the opinion that this rare and astonishing old man was the very one, not only to recommend each of the "three religions," but also to demonstrate that "the three religions are really one." Accordingly they all three once more presented themselves before the old man, in company with each other. They explained the object of their previous visits, and the lofty hopes which the old man's wisdom had excited, that through him all three religions might be revived, and at last reduced to practice. The old man, still seated, listened respectfully and attentively, and replied as follows: "Venerable sages, your benevolence is high as heaven and deep as the seas. Your plan is admirably profound in its wisdom. But you have made an unfortunate selection in the agent through whom you wish to accomplish this mightly reform. It is true that I have looked into the books of Reason, and of the Law, and into the Classics. It is also true that I have a partial perception of their sublimity and unity. But there is one circumstance of which you have not taken account. Perhaps you are not aware of it. *It is only from my waist upward that I am a man; below that point, I am made of stone. My forte is to discuss the duties of men from all the various points of view, but I am so unfortunately constituted that I can never reduce any of them to practice.*" Confucius, Laotze, and Buddha sighed deeply, and vanished from the earth, and since that day no effort has been made to find a mortal who is able to exhibit in his life the teachings of the three religions.

A comparison has often been made between the condition of China at the present time and that of the Roman Empire during the first century of our era. That the moral state of China now is far higher than that of the Roman Empire then, scarcely admits of a rational doubt, but in China, as in Rome, religious faith has reached the point of decay. Of China it might be said, as Gibbon remarked of Rome, that to the common people all religions are

equally true, to the philosopher all are equally false, and to the magistrate all are equally useful. Of the Emperor of China, as of the Roman Emperor, it might be affirmed that he is "at once a high-priest, an atheist, and a god"! To such a state has Confucianism, mixed with polytheism and pantheism, brought the Empire!

CHAPTER XL.

CONCLUSION.

In speaking as we have done of the defects of Confucianism, we by no means intend to do it the injustice of denying that, as a system of thought, it is among the most remarkable intellectual achievements of the race. It is true that the Western reader cannot escape a feeling that much of what he finds in the Confucian classics is jejune. But it is not merely by perusing them that we are to receive our most forcible impressions of what the Chinese classics are and have been, but by *contemplating their effects.* Here is the Chinese race, by far the mightiest aggregation of human beings in any one nation on earth, "with a written history extending as far back as that of any other which the world has known, the only nation that has throughout retained its nationality, and has never been ousted from the land where it first appeared," existing, for aught that appears, in much the same way as in hoary antiquity. What is the explanation of this unexampled fact? By what means has this incomputable mass of human beings dwelling on the Chinese plains, from the dawn of history until now, been controlled, and how is it that they appear to be an exception to the universal law of the decay and death of nations?

Those who have investigated this subject most thoroughly are united in declaring that this result is due to the fact that, whereas other nations have depended upon physical force, the Chinese have depended upon moral forces. No student of history, no observant traveller who knows human nature, can fail to be impressed to the point of deep awe, with the thought of *the marvellous restraining power* which Chinese morality has exerted upon the race from the earliest times until now. "It would be hard to over-estimate," says Dr. Williams, "the influence of Confucius in his ideal princely scholar, and the power for good over his race

which this conception has ever since exerted." "The immeasurable influence in after-ages of the character thus portrayed, proves how lofty was his own standard, and the national conscience has ever since assented to the justice of the portrait." "The teaching of Confucianism on human duty," says Dr. Legge, "is wonderful and admirable. It is not perfect indeed." "But on the last three of the four things which Confucius delighted to teach—"letters, ethics, devotion of soul, and truthfulness"—his utterances are in harmony both with the Law and the Gospel. A world ordered by them would be a beautiful world."

The entire freedom of the Chinese classical works from anything which could debase the mind of the readers, is a most important characteristic, which has been often pointed out, and which is in the greatest possible contrast to the literatures of India, Greece, and Rome. "No people," says Mr. Meadows, "whether of ancient or modern times, has possessed a sacred literature so completely exempt as the Chinese from licentious descriptions, and from every offensive expression. There is not a single sentence in the whole of the Sacred Books and their annotations that may not be read aloud in any family circle in England. Again, in every other non-Christian country, idolatry has been associated with human sacrifices and with the deification of vice, accompanied by licentious rites and orgies. Not a sign of all this exists in China."

The direct personal responsibility of the Emperor to heaven for the quality of his rule; the exaltation of the people as of more importance than the rulers; the doctrine that the virtuous and able *(hsien-neng)* should be the rulers, and that their rule must be based upon virtue; the comprehensive theory of the five relations of men to each other; these points have stood out like mountain peaks from the general level of Chinese thought and have attracted the attention of the observers. In closing what we have to say of the Chinese, we wish to place emphasis upon the moral excellencies of the Confucian system, for it is only by putting those excellencies in their true light that we can hope to arrive at any just comprehension of the Chinese people. Those excellences have made the Chinese pre-eminently amenable to moral forces. The employment of the classical writings in the civil service examinations for successive ages has unified the minds

of the people to a marvellous degree, and the powerful motives thus brought into play, leading every candidate for a degree to hope for the stability of the government as a pre-requisite to his own success, has doubtless been a principal factor in the perpetuation of the Chinese people to this present time.

The Confucian Classics are the chart by which the rulers of China have endeavoured to navigate the ship of state. It is the best chart ever constructed by man, and perhaps it is not too much to say, with the late Dr. Williams, Dr. Legge, and others, that its authors may have had in some sense a divine guidance. With what success the Chinese have navigated their craft, and into what waters they have sailed; in what direction they are at present steering, these are questions of capital importance, now that China is coming into intimate relations with so many Western states, and seems likely in the future to exert an influence increasingly great.

It has been said that "there are six indications of the moral life of a community, either of which is significant; when they all agree in their testimony, they afford an infallible test of its true character. These are (1) the condition of industry; (2) the social habits; (3) the position of woman and the character of the family; (4) the organisation of government, and the character of the rulers; (5) the state of public education; (6) the practical bearing of religious worship on actual life."

In the discussion of the various characteristics of the Chinese which have attracted our notice, each of the foregoing points has been incidentally illustrated, albeit incompletely, and without that observance of proportion necessary in a full treatment of these topics. In a survey of the Chinese character the field of view is so extensive that many subjects must be passed by altogether. The characteristics which have been selected are intended merely as points through which lines may be drawn to aid in outlining the whole. Every reader will be able to suggest many additional "characteristics" which ought to be included in a full presentation of the Chinese as they are.

Mr. Meadows, the most philosophical of the many writers on China and the Chinese, expressed the opinion that the best way to convey to the mind of another person a correct idea of the genius of a foreign people, would be to hand him for perusal

a collection of notes, formed by carefully recording great numbers of incidents which had attracted one's attention, particularly those that seemed at all extraordinary, together with the explanation of the extraordinary parts, as given by natives of the country. The greater part of the illustrative incidents which have been herein-before cited in exemplification of various "characteristics" of the Chinese, have been mentioned because they appeared upon examination to be typical. They are like bones of a skeleton which must be fitted into their place before the whole structure can be seen. It will not do to ignore them, unless perhaps it can be shown that they are not bones at all, but merely plaster-of-Paris imitations. It may indeed be objected that the true place of each separate bone has been mistaken, and that others which are important modifiers of the total result have not been adjusted to their proper places. This criticism, which is a perfectly just one, we not only admit but expressly affirm, declaring that it is not possible to gain a complete idea of the Chinese from selected "characteristics," any more than it is possible to gain a correct idea of a human countenance from descriptive essays on its eyes, its nose, or its chin. But at the same time, we must again remind the reader that the judgments expressed have not been hastily formed, that they are based upon a mass of observations far in excess of what has been referred to, and that in many cases the opinions might have been made indefinitely stronger, and still have been fully warranted by the facts. These facts are as patent to one who comes within their range as a North China dust-storm which fills the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the hair and the clothing with an almost impalpable powder, often surcharging the atmosphere with electricity, and sometimes rendering lamps necessary at noon-day. One may be very wrong in his theory of the causes of this phenomenon, but altogether right in his description of it. But there is this important difference between the observation of physical and of moral phenomena; the former force themselves on the attention of every human being, while the latter are perceived only by those whose opportunities are favourable, and whose faculties are directed toward the things that are to be seen. A Roman Catholic little girl was telling some of her Protestant school-mates the details of one of the "miracles" of the Middle Ages, and was met by the somewhat unsympathetic response,

"Why, *I don't believe that.*" Her reply has a significance for those who have been confronted with disagreeable moral phenomena which others, from their superior stand-point, dispute. "Well, I would not believe it if I were you, but I have got to!"

The truth is that the phenomena of Chinese life are of a contradictory character, and whoever looks upon one face of the shield, ignoring the other, will infallibly judge erroneously, and yet will never come to a perception of the fact that he is wrong. The union of two apparently irreconcileable views in one concept is not an easy task, but it is often a very necessary one, and nowhere is it more necessary than in China, where it is so difficult to see even one side completely, not to speak of both. In illustration of this proposition, let us for a moment revert to the subject of Confucianism, judged by the crucial test of its results. Intellectually it has been the vital principle of the Chinese people, without which they would not have been the Chinese.

"The great T'ai Tsung," remarks the late Dr. Williamson, "the founder of the T'ang dynasty, said that the precepts of the sages were for the Chinese what the water is for the fishes." Confucianism has unified the language, the thought, and the race. It has developed a nation of keen intellectual ability, able as we have already remarked to hold their own with any other race now on the planet. We are constantly surprised and delighted by the rapidity, accuracy and apparent ease with which some Chinese seem to assimilate knowledge, even when cast in foreign moulds. They have that genius which is "infinite capacity for labour," and those staying qualities which enable them to win every race. Their education is narrow and inadequate. But still it is education, and enables them to use their minds, the true end of education. The mind of an educated Chinese resembles a steam-engine on rails; it is fitted to its particular track and to no other; the moment it leaves this track it is "ditched" and helpless. But as long as it remains upon that track it moves with an ease and a power which is truly wonderful. Nor is this intellectual force confined to those who are educated. As the writer just quoted has truly remarked, it is very common to meet with able men among the coolies. The minds of women in China have been totally neglected for countless ages, the insignificant exceptions only serving to illustrate the dense darkness which has prevailed,

thick darkness that might be felt. Yet many of the ordinary Chinese women have well-balanced and practical minds, and it is a very common phenomenon to find women virtually at the head of the entire establishment, dominating their husbands by sheer superiority of mental ability.

The literary examinations of China offer one of the most remarkable phenomena in the intellectual history of mankind, and they are still sometimes cited by Western statesmen and writers as indicating the general lines along which civil-service reform ought to proceed among Occidentals. In no country is learning more respected than in China.

The teacher is a kind of king. Reading men are everywhere pushed to the front, and looked upon by the uninitiated with a species of awe. A man who opens a book in a public place will be surrounded almost immediately by a dozen others, not one of whom perhaps can recognize a character, though they gaze at them with wistful eyes, as the mysterious pathway to power, thus paying a fine, because an unconscious, tribute to the supremacy of intellectual force in China. Even the husks of learning are sacred, and benevolent societies employ small armies of men to perambulate the public streets and gather up the smallest scrap of written matter, to be burned in structures specially prepared for this purpose.

This is one side of the shield. Now let us look on the other. The whole system of Chinese education is directed to the object of making the pupils remember the words of the classics. This is a prerequisite for the use which he is eventually to make of them. Therefore in the early years, when the memory is vigorous, it is loaded down with the most incongruous and fatal burden of matter not one thousandth of which is or can be comprehended by the pupil. If he perseveres in his course, the time will eventually arrive when this mass of inert matter will be more or less perfectly digested. Explanations will be given and received, and intellectual daylight will dawn.

But to the vast mass of pupils, whose term of study is limited to a few years, no such result will follow. They are the victims of "intellectual infanticide" on a gigantic scale. They have learned to repeat but not to think; and memory of what they learned to repeat grows fainter year by year and soon totally

disappears, leaving a more or less complete mental vacuity. When we speak of China as ruled by its men of learning, we must take account of the uncounted millions of minds that have been partially or wholly blighted by this terrible system. Its constant inevitable tendency is to cultivate a profound reverence for the form, at the expense of that for which the form should stand. Multitudes who can recognize characters with comparative readiness, when an unfamiliar book is submitted to them are found to be occupied solely with the correct enunciation of the ideographs, to the utter exclusion of any thought as to the ideas which the characters are intended to convey. Chinese education produces some remarkable results, but it produces them at an expense of intellectual waste which might make angels weep.

The Chinese literary examinations are conducted by means of themes, upon which essays are to be prepared. According to the theory, the preparation of an ideal essay is the mightiest achievement of the human intellect. We have just seen that it is the theoretical condition of good government that the wise and able should rule; but when the matter is reduced to practice, it turns out to be the man who is master of the most correct literary style, and who can impart the most faultless finish of form to his propositions (not one of which is or can be new), who is regarded with the degree, a sufficient number of which in a slow, toilsome, and increasingly difficult series make it probable that the recipient will find official employment at last.

We have spoken of the blighted minds left in the track of Chinese education. In an Empire containing a total population of perhaps three hundred and fifty millions, there seems to be good reason for estimating the number of those who can read Chinese characters at all as *not more than fifteen millions, and perhaps not more than seven millions.* The prodigious waste of mental force experienced in the early stages of education is matched by a similar waste in its higher ranges, where the chances of taking a degree at any particular examination do not appear to rise ordinarily above one or two in a hundred. And when a scholar has definitely failed to take his degree, the time expended in acquiring the technical skill required to compose examination essays is practically lost unless he becomes in turn a school-master and gives his life to instructing other minds how to repeat the same

weary round. The irrationality of supposing that the best essayist is the person most fitted to be a magistrate, or that he is fitted at all, has been so often exposed that we need only allude to it in passing. Yet it is toward this single point that all Chinese education must be made to tend.

Thus much in respect to the intellectual influence of Confucianism. Of its lofty moral quality we have already spoken. That it produces many individuals possessing a high moral character, we are prepared to believe. That is what ought to be expected from so excellent a system of morals. But does it produce such characters on any considerable scale, and with any approach to uniformity? The real character of any human being can be discovered by answering three questions: What is his relation to himself? What is his relation to his fellow-men? What is his relation to the object of his worship? Through these three fixed points the circle defining his true position may be drawn. Those who may have followed us thus far know already what replies we find in the Chinese of to-day to these test questions. His relations both to himself and to others are marked by an absence of sincerity and an absence of altruism; his relations to the objects of his worship are those of a polytheist, a pantheist and an agnostic.

What the Chinese lack is not intellectual ability. It is not patience, practicality, nor cheerfulness, for in all these qualities they greatly excel. *What they do lack is Character and Conscience.* Some Chinese officials cannot be tempted by any bribe, and like the famous Yang Chen, already referred to, refuse to commit a wrong that will never be found out, because "Heaven knows, earth knows, you know, and I know." But how many Chinese could be found who would resist the pressure brought upon them to recommend for employment a relative who was known to be incompetent? Imagine for a moment the *domestic consequences* of such resistance, and is it strange that any Chinese should dread to face them? But what Chinese would ever think of carrying theoretical morals into such a region as that? When it is seen what a part parasitism and nepotism play in the administration of China, civil, military, and commercial, is it any wonder that Chinese gate-keepers and constables are not to be depended upon for the honest performance of their duties? A Sunday-school

scholar once repeated a passage which explained the pre-eminence of a distinguished historical character, as follows: "Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because *an excellent spine* was in him." At the point at which, according to this "revised version," Daniel was strongest, the Chinese is weakest; he lacks backbone.

We have often remarked, among those who have studied the Chinese classics all their lives, a trait which we are happy to believe is not general, but which we are compelled by truth to affirm to be far from uncommon. It is the absence of that self-respect which seems to us so precious a treasure, and which under various forms is so often commended in the classics, as in the saying that the superior man will be careful what he does when he is alone. When a Chinese literary man is so reduced as to be obliged to entreat favours of foreigners, no one can be a more importunate beggar than he. His request, which often becomes a virtual demand, he bases upon his literary attainments, and he is ready to enforce it if necessary with unlimited prostrations, which have to him no more meaning than so many exclamation points.

A foreigner, who had in his employ a fat and highly dignified Chinese teacher, was one day called away from his study while engaged in settling an account, leaving the money drawer of his desk open. Upon his return, the amount on hand was observed to be short by several dollars. It was not probable that a self-respecting Confucianist would risk his reputation for the sake of so small a sum, yet it was apparent that no one else could have taken the dollars. He was therefore confronted with the facts, and of course stoutly denied any knowledge of the loss. But as the circumstantial evidence was so strong, the "flinty" foreigner gave him his choice between throwing up his situation, or paying back the money. As was anticipated, the teacher at once decided to give up the place, and retired with great dignity. The decision was no sooner taken, however, than the proverbial philosophy of his countrymen came to the pundit's mind, in the shape of the following aphorism: "If you would support your family, do not give way to anger; giving way to anger will not support your family." Having meditated overnight upon this axiom, the disciple of the ancient sages made his appearance the next morning, to say that he would pay back the missing sum out of his monthly wages!

Another Chinese teacher in the employ of the writer was in the habit of using opium, for which he was likely to be discharged. He not only promised to give up this indulgence, but he emphasised his assurance by the earnest suggestion that if his employer should ever at any time hear of the repetition of the offence, he should take a club and beat the native pundit therewithal!

When Rasselas was attracted by the philosophisings of the teachers of morality whom he met, his wise old mentor, Imlac, warned him that though they discoursed like angels, they lived like men. Dean Stanley remarked that the world has added to the decalogue an eleventh commandment, which runs, "Thou shalt not be found out in breaking the other ten." Even while considering this characteristic of the Chinese, an incident has occurred within the writer's experience, which may serve not only as an illustration of the trait, but also of the observations both of the sage Imlac, and of Dean Stanley.

Two Chinese students, aged eighteen and twenty-two respectively, came to the foreigner's premises, and paid a visit to a room occupied by a writer in a dispensary, with whom they were well acquainted. As he was out at the time, they stepped into another room also occupied by a dispensary assistant, where they were observed and addressed by a servant on the premises. They also visited the dispensary, where they engaged in conversation with a teacher, who politely inquired their names, age, and residence. Soon after they left the premises. They had departed but a short time, when the dispensary assistant, into whose room they had last gone, entered it, and missed a fine nickel-plated water-pipe of Soochow make, which cost about five dollars. At the time of their entrance it had been standing upon a table. The dispensary assistant, certain that the two students had stolen the pipe, which was quite unlike any in use in that region, and which he valued as a present, at once went to a village about a mile distant, where one of the scholars lived. Here, after some difficulty, he succeeding in seeing the father of one of the young men, and stated the loss which had been incurred, and also that it was certain that the young men must have taken the pipe, since no one else had been in the room. He also judiciously suggested that it had no doubt been "borrowed" by the students, under the impression that it was the property of the man whom they knew. As such proceedings

are very common among the Chinese, this offered a perfectly feasible mode of escape for the youths, and one which they would have done well to adopt. It would then have been only necessary to return the pipe, with the apology that it was a "mistake," and the matter would have been at an end. They chose, however, to deny all knowledge of the affair, and the owner of the pipe returned baffled. The next day, according to the invariable Chinese usage, intermediaries were employed representing each side. Some of them became entangled in the matter until they would not go further, and then turned over their commissions to others.

In a few days nearly a score of persons, residents of four different villages, had been drawn into the affair, upon one side or the other. The preceptor of the lads would not for a moment admit that scholars of his could commit such a disgraceful act (as to be *detected* in stealing a water-pipe); if they had really done it, he would "beat them severely, and turn them out of school." But the chain of proof was so unexpectedly strong that it became hopeless to deny the charge, at the same time that it was more and more out of the question to admit it. It was another case of the irresistible projectile impinging upon the invulnerable target. The owner of the pipe feared, that with the obstinacy of character for which many Chinese are noted, the culprits would continue to protest their innocence, even if subjected to tortures in the district yamên, and thus after all succeed in saving their "face." Besides, who ever heard of driving so trifling a matter to so dire an extremity? Each side would have been glad to get out of the difficulty, but neither side could retreat. It was now admitted that the young men did take the pipe, *but as it had been soon after stolen from them*, they were wholly unable to produce it!

At last it was agreed that the matter should be compromised, as all Chinese matters must be, by a feast. At this there were present all of the principals and intermediaries who could be collected, to the number of nearly twenty. To add to the moral effect, two foreigners occupied seats of prominence. Before the feast began, the two young men appeared at the front door, and made their *k'o-t'ou* in abject humility. They were sternly addressed by their preceptor, who warned them to be careful what they did next time; they were categorically asked by the owner of the pipe

whether they took it, and they admitted that they did so. After this they retired. But the pipe was not produced, because no one knew where it was! Its value in full was paid in cash as a part of the festivities! This whole preposterous transaction illustrated that "splendid mendacity" for which the Chinese have become so famous, but it illustrated still more that quality of Chinese ethics in application, according to which it was thought better by all the friends of two young Confucian thieves to act a palpable lie with a view to saving their "face," rather than openly to admit and atone for their fault—and this, too, when the fact of the theft was publicly and expressly acknowledged! Two graduates and several other literary men took part in this adjustment, the real object of which seemed to be to enable the participants to lie out of the matter afterwards, by a pretence that they had been forced to make reparation for an imaginary loss, driven thereto by dread of foreigners!

He who wishes to learn the truth about the moral condition of the Chinese can do so by the aid of the Chinese themselves, who, however ready to cover their own shortcomings and those of their friends, are often singularly frank in confessing the weak points in the national character. Some of these descriptions of the Chinese, by other Chinese, have often served to us as reminders of a conversation upon which Carlyle dwells with evident enjoyment, in one of the volumes of his *Life of Frederick the Great*, That monarch had a school-inspector, of whom he was rather fond, and with whom he liked to talk a little. "Well, M. Sulzer, how do your schools get on?" asked the King one day. "How goes our education business?" "Surely, not ill, your Majesty, and much better in late years," answered Sulzer. "In late years, why?" "Well, your Majesty, in former times, the notion being that mankind were naturally inclined to evil, a system of severity prevailed in schools; but now, when we recognize that the inborn inclination of men is rather to good than to evil, school-masters have adopted a more generous procedure." "Inclination rather to good," said Frederick, shaking his old head, with a sad smile: "Alas, dear Sulzer, *Ach, mein lieber Sulzer*, I see you don't know that damned race of creatures *(Er kennt nicht diese verdammte Race)* as I do." Here is a speech for you! "Pardon the king, who was himself so beneficent and excellent a king," cry several

editors of the rose-pink type. This present editor, for his share, will at once forgive; but can he ever forget!"

Chinese society resembles some of the scenery in China. Seen at a little distance it appears fair and attractive. Upon a nearer approach, however, there is invariably much that is shabby and repulsive, and the air is full of odours which are not fragrant. No photograph does justice to Chinese scenery, for though photography has been described as "justice without mercy," this is not true of Chinese photography, in which the dirt and the smells are omitted.

There is no country in the world where the symbol denoting happiness is so constantly before the eye as in China. But it requires no long experience to discover that it is a true observation that *Chinese happiness is all on the outside.* We believe it to be a criticism substantially just that *there are no homes in Asia.*

The theory of Chinese society may be compared to the theory of Chinese music. It is very ancient. It is very complex. It rests upon an essential "harmony" between heaven and earth. "Therefore when the material principal of music (that is the instruments), is clearly and rightly illustrated, the corresponding spiritual principle (that is the essence, the sounds of music) becomes perfectly manifest, and the State's affairs are successfully conducted." (See Von Aalst's "Chinese Music, *passim*.") The scale seems to resemble that to which we are accustomed. There is a wide range of instruments. Confucius taught that music is an essential to good government, and was so affected by the performance in his hearing of a piece which was at that time sixteen hundred years old, that for three months he was unable to relish his food, his mind being wholly on the music. Moreover the *sheng*, one of the Chinese instruments which is frequently referred to in the book of Odes, embodies principles which are "substantially the same as those of our grand organs. Indeed, according to various writers, the introduction of the *sheng* into Europe led to the invention of the accordion and the harmonium. Kratzenstein, an organ-builder of St. Petersburg, having become possessed of a *sheng*, conceived the idea of applying the principle of organ-stops. That the *sheng* is one of the most important of Chinese musical instruments is apparent. No other instrument is nearly so perfect, either for sweetness of tone or delicacy of construction."

But we hear that ancient music has lost its hold upon the nation. "During the present dynasty, the Emperors K'ang Hsi and Ch'ien Lung have done much to bring music back to its old splendour, but their efforts cannot be said to have been very successful. A total change has taken place in the ideas of that people which has been everywhere represented as unchangeable; they have changed, and so radically that the music art, which formerly always occupied the post of honour, is now deemed the lowest calling a man can profess." "Serious music, which according to the classics is a necessary compliment of education, is totally abandoned. Very few Chinese are able to play on the *ch'in*, the *sheng*, or the *yun-lo*, and still fewer are acquainted with the theory of the *lüs*." But though they may not be able to play, all Chinese can sing. Yes, they can "sing," that is they can emit a cascade of nasal and falsetto cackles, which do by no means serve to remind the unhappy auditor of the traditional "harmony" in music between heaven and earth. And this is the sole outcome, in popular practice, of the theory of ancient Chinese music!

Chinese society may be likened to the Chinese wheelbarrow. The reports of these singular instruments, as described by the Jesuit missionaries, seem to have excited much surprise in Europe, especially the fact that they are at times partly propelled by the wind. How interesting! How clever the Chinese must be! How much better than our clumsy method! Thus Milton speaks of

"Sericana, where Chinese drive
"With sails and wind their cany wagons light."

Thus too Jules Verne, who seems to have followed Milton, to the exclusion of any more recent authorities, in one of those strange tales the most salient feature of which is supposed to be verisimilitude, makes his hero engage one of these wonderful vehicles in the deep interior of the Empire, and simply by pronouncing the magic formula "into the shafts," compels his Shanghai house-boy alone and unassisted to convey him by circuitous routes, *but always with a favourable wind*, several hundred miles to Peking! Not unlike this treatment of the Chinese barrow is the idealisation which Chinese society has undergone when discussed by those who, like M. Verne, were not at all "hampered by facts." Upon examination a Chinese wheelbarrow is not in the least "cany," but is found to be made of hard

wood and a great deal of it. It is not "light;" it is heavy. With the exception of the terrible toil in the mines, which has already been described, and the tracking of junks in the Yangtze gorges, the labour performed by the Chinese wheel-barrowman is more like that of a beast than any work done in China. Then, too, the Chinese wheel-barrow creaks, for it is never oiled (but the Chinese themselves do not appear to mind that) and there is an inevitable friction which is not merely heard but is felt. All this is as true of Chinese social life as of their wheel-barrows, and if this proposition is doubted by any one, it is certainly not doubted by the Chinese themselves.

In contemplating the theory of Chinese society, and the way in which that theory is reduced to fact, we are often reminded of those stone tablets to be seen at the spot where the principal highways cross streams. The object of these tablets is to preserve in "everlasting remembrance" the names of those by whom the bridges were erected and repaired. Sometimes there are half a dozen such stones in immediate proximity, in various stages of decay. We are much interested in these memorials of former dynasties and of ages long gone by, and enquire for the bridge the building of which they commemorate. "Oh, that," we are told, "disappeared generations ago—no one knows when!"

Of the vitality of the Chinese we have already spoken at length. In many aspects they are physically a marvellous race, unmatched incomparable. A traveller might penetrate from one end of the Empire to the other, and see few signs of disease, and as compared with the enormous population, scarcely any signs at all. But let a foreign dispensary be opened anywhere, whether in a great city or in a small hamlet is immaterial, one will soon learn what is the physical condition of the people. The record of the cases treated at any foreign dispensary and hospital in China resembles an index to a comprehensive work on the theory and practice of medicine. Nearly all the familiar diseases and lesions are to be found, and many new modifications, not elsewhere observed. The Chinese have a splendid physical vitality; but do they or do they not need foreign medical science?

A few years ago the writer was travelling on the Grand Canal, when a head-wind prevented further progress. Strolling along the bank, we found the peasants busily engaged in planting their

fields. It was May, and the appearance of the country was one of great beauty. Any traveller might have admired the minute and untiring industry which cultivated such wide areas, as if they were gardens. But a short conversation with these same peasants brought to light the fact that the winter had been to them a time of bitter severity. Floods and drought having in the previous year destroyed the crops, in every village around people had starved to death—nay, were at that moment starving. The magistrates had given a little relief, but it was inadequate, sporadic, and subject to shameful peculations, against which the poor people had no protection, and for which there was no redress. Yet nothing of all this appeared upon the surface. Elsewhere the year had been a prosperous one, the harvests abundant, and the people content. No memorial in the *Peking Gazette*, no news item in the foreign journals published in China, had taken account of the facts. But ignorance of these facts on the part of others certainly had no tendency to alter the facts themselves. The people of the district continued to starve, whether other people knew it or not. Even the flat denial of the facts would not prove an adequate measure of relief. *A priori* reasoning as to what the Chinese ought to be, is one thing; careful observation of what they actually are, is quite another.

That many of the evils in Chinese society the existence of which we have pointed out are also to be found in Western "nominally Christian lands," we are perfectly aware. Perhaps the reader may have been disappointed not to find a more definite recognition of this fact, and some systematic attempt at comparison and contrast. Such a procedure was in contemplation, but it had to be given up. The writer's acquaintance with any Western country, except his own, is of an altogether too limited and inadequate character to justify the undertaking which must for other reasons have failed. Let each reader make his own running comparisons, as he proceeds, freeing himself as far as he may be able from "the bias of patriotism," and always giving the Chinese the benefit of the doubt. After such a comparison shall have been made, the very lowest result which we should expect, would be the ascertained fact that the face of every Western land is towards the dawning morning of the future, while the face of China is always and everywhere towards the darkness of the

remote past. A most pregnant fact, if it is a fact, and one which we beg the reader to ponder well; for how came it about?

The needs of China, let us repeat, are few. They are only Character and Conscience. Nay, they are but one, for Conscience *is* Character. It was said of a famous maker of pianos, that he was "like his own instruments—square, upright, and grand." Have any of our readers ever met any such characters in China?

At the close of the biography of one of the literary men of England, who died but a few years ago, occurs the following passage, written by his wife. "The outside world must judge him as an author, a preacher, a member of society; but they only who lived with him in the intimacy of every-day life at home, can tell what he was as a man. Over the real romance of his life, and over the tenderest, loveliest passages in his private letters, a veil must be thrown; but it will not be lifting it too far to say, that if in the highest, closest of earthly relationships, a love that never failed—pure, passionate, for six and thirty years—a love which never stooped from its own lofty level to a hasty word, an impatient gesture, or a selfish act, in sickness or in health, in sunshine or in storm, by day or by night, could prove that the age of chivalry has not passed away forever, Charles Kingsley fulfilled the ideal of a "most true and perfect knight" to the one woman blest with that love in time and to eternity."

The fairest fruit of Christian civilization is in the beautiful lives which is produces. They are not rare. Hundreds of records of such lives have been produced within the present generation, and there are thousands upon thousands of such lives of which no public record ever appears. Every reader must have known of at least one such life of single-hearted devotion to the good of others, and some have been privileged to know many such, within the range of their own experience. How are these lives to be accounted for, and whence do they draw their inspiration? We have no wish to be unduly sceptical, but after repeated and prolonged consideration of the subject, it is our deliberate conviction that if the forces which make the lives of the Chinese what they are, were to produce *one such character* as Mrs. Kingsley represents her husband to have been, *that would be a moral miracle greater than any or all that are recorded in the book of Taoist fables.* No human institution can escape from the law, inexorable because

divine; by their fruits ye shall know them. The forces of Confucianism have had an abundant time in which to work out their ultimate results. We believe that they have long since done all that they are capable of doing, and that from them there is no further fruit to be expected. They have achieved all that man alone can do, and more than he has done in any other land, under any other conditions. And after a patient survey of all that China has to offer, the most friendly critic is compelled, reluctantly and sadly, to coincide in the verdict of the orator Wendell Phillips: "*The answer to Confucianism is China.*"

Three mutually inconsistent theories are held in regard to Reform in China. First that it is unnecessary. This is no doubt the view of some of the Chinese themselves, though by no means of all Chinese. It is also the opinion adopted by certain foreigners, who look at China and the Chinese through the mirage of distance. Second, that reform is impossible. This pessimistic conclusion is arrived at by many who have had too much occasion to know the tremendous obstacles which any permanent and real reform must encounter, before it can even be tried. To such persons, the thorough reformation of so vast a body as the Chinese people, appears to be a task as hopeless as the galvanizing into life of an Egyptian mummy. To us the second of these views appears only less unreasonable than the first; but if what has been already said fails to make this evident, nothing that could here be added would be sufficient to do so.

To those who are agreed that reform in China is both necessary and possible, the question by what agency that reform is to be brought about is an important one, and it is not surprising that there are several different and inharmonious replies.

At the very outset, we have to face the enquiry, *Can China be reformed from within herself?* That she can be thus reformed, is taken for granted by those of her statesmen who are able to perceive the vital need of reformation. An instance of this assumption occurred in a recent memorial in the *Peking Gazette*, in which the writer complained of the inhabitants of one of the central provinces as turbulent, and stated that a certain number of competent persons had been appointed to go through the province, to explain to the people the maxims of the Sacred Edicts of K'ang Hsi, by which vigorous measure it was apperently

expected that the character of the population would in time be ameliorated. This preaching of moral maxims to the people is a favorite prescription for the amendment of the morals of the time, in spite of the barrenness of results. When it fails, as it always does, there is nothing to be done but to try it over again. That it must fail, is shown by the longest experience, with every modification of circumstances, except in the results, which are as nearly as possible uniformly *nil.* This has been sufficiently shown already in the instructive allegory of the eloquent old man whose limbs were stone.

But if mere precept is inert, it might be expected that example would be more efficient. This topic has also been previously discussed, and we need recur to it only to point out the reason why in the end the best examples always fail to produce the intended results. It is because they have no power to propagate the impulse which gave them life. Take for example the case of Chang Chih-tung, formerly governor of Shansi, where he is reported to have made the most vigorous efforts to put a stop to the practice of opium-smoking among the officials, and opium-raising among the people. How many of his subordinates would honestly co-operate in this effort, and what could possibly be effected without such co-operation? Every foreigner is compelled to recognize his own comparative helplessness in Chinese matters, when the intermediaries through whom alone he can act, are not in sympathy with his plans for reform. But if a foreigner is comparatively helpless, a Chinese, no matter what his rank, is not less so. The utmost that can be expected is that when his purpose is seen to be inflexibly fixed, the incorruptible official will carry everything before him (so far as external appearances go), as a cat clears an attic of rats, *while the cat is there.* But the moment the official is removed, almost before he has fairly gone, the rats are back at their work and everything goes on as before.

That a Chinese official should cherish hopes of personally reforming his country, is not only creditable to him, but perfectly natural, for he is cognisant of no other way than the one which we have described. An intelligent British official, who knows much better what is involved in permanent "reform," would have been able to predict the result with infallible precision. In referring to certain abuses in southwest China, connected with the

production of copper, Mr. Baber remarks, "Before the mines can be adequately worked, Yunnan must be peopled, the Lolos must be fairly treated, roads must be constructed, the facilities offered for navigation by the upper Yangtze must be improved—in short, China must be civilized. *A thousand years would be too short a period to allow of such a consummation, unless some force from without should accelerate the impulse.*"* To attempt to reform China without "some force from without," is like trying to build a ship in the sea; all the laws of air and water conspire to make it impossible. It is a principle of mechanics that a force that begins and ends in a machine, has no power to move it.

Between Tientsin and Peking there is a bend in the Peiho, where the traveller sees half of a ruined temple standing on the brink of the bank. The other half has been washed away. Just below is an elaborate barrier against the water, composed of bundles of reeds tied to stakes. Half of this has been carried away by the floods. The gods stand exposed to the storms, the land lies exposed to inundation, the river is half silted up, a melancholy type of the condition of the Empire. There is classical authority for the dictum that "rotten wood cannot be carved." It must be wholly cut away, and new material grafted upon the old stock. China can never be reformed from within.

* These significant words of the late lamented Mr. Baber have recently received a striking confirmation from a memorial in the *Peking Gazette* of August 1890, from T'ang Chiung, director of mines in Yunnan, who makes a report in regard to the condition of the works, and the output. He states that "*a great deal of illicit mining is carried on by the people, and the officials are afraid of the consequences of asserting their rights despotically. A plan has, however, been devised of buying up the copper privately mined by the natives at a low price, and thus taking advantage of the extra labour, by a measure at once profitable and popular.* In this way the memorialist thinks the mines will work well, and will give no excuse for the intrusion of outsiders." The rescript merely orders the Board of Revenue to "take note."

In a postscript memorial the director informs the Emperor that *ten thousand catties of copper are bought monthly from the illicit workers of the private mines, and that the laborers "are not paid wages, but are supplied with oil and rice."* In conclusion he "*describes the whole state of the mines as highly satisfactory.*"

It is not every day that an official of the rank of governor officially informs an Emperor that the laws of his Empire are constantly and deliberately violated by large numbers of persons, with whom the magistrates dare not interfere; but whom on the other hand, they mollify with "oil, rice," and a sum of money sufficient to induce them to part with their stolen copper; and that in consequence of this defiance of the Emperor and his officials, the condition of the Emperor's mines is "highly satisfactory." No wonder the Board of Revenue was invited to "take note!"

It is not long since the idea was widely entertained in the lands of the West, that China was to be regenerated by being brought into "the sisterhood of nations." The process by which she was introduced into that "sisterhood" was not indeed such as to give rise to any well-founded hopes of national regeneration as a consequence. And now that the leading nations have had their several representatives at Peking for nearly thirty years, what beneficial effect has their presence had upon the evils from which China suffers? The melancholy truth is that the international relations of the great powers are precisely those in which they appear to the least advantage. The Chinese are keen observers; what do they perceive in the conduct of any one of the States of the West, to lead to the conviction that those States are actuated by motives more elevated than those which actuate the Empire which they wish to "reform?" And now that China herself Is becoming a "Power," she has her hands fully occupied in playing off one set of foreign interests against another, without taking lessons of those who are much more concerned in "exploiting" China, than in teaching her morals. If China is to be reformed, it will not be done by diplomacy.

There are not wanting those who are firmly persuaded that what is needed by China, is not merely admission into the family of nations, but unrestricted intercourse, free trade, and the brotherhood of man. The gospel of commerce is the panacea for China's needs; more ports, more imports, a lower tariff and no *likin* taxes. Perhaps we do not hear so much of this, now, as a decade or two ago, during which time the Chinese have penetrated more fully than before into Australia and the United States, with results not always most favourable to "unrestricted intercourse," and the "brotherhood of man." Have there not also been loud whispers that Chinese tea and Chinese strawbraid have been defective in some desirable qualities, and has not this lack been partly matched by defects in certain articles imported into China from the lands of the West? As an auxiliary of civilization, commerce is invaluable, but it is not by itself an instrument of reform. Adam Smith, the great apostle of modern political economy, defined man as "a trading animal;" no two dogs, he says, exchange bones. But supposing they did so, and supposing that in every great city the canine population were to establish a

bone exchange, what would be the inevitable effect upon the character of the dogs? The great trading nations of antiquity were not the best nations, but the worst. That the same is not true of their modern successors, is certainly not due to their trade, but to wholly different causes. It has been well said that commerce, like Christianity, is cosmical in its aim; but *Commerce, like the rainbow, always bends towards the pot of gold.*

It is sufficient to point to the continent of Africa, with its rum and its slave traffic, each introduced by trading and by Christian nations, and each unspeakable curses, to show that *taken up itself*, there is no reformatory influence in commerce.

There are many friends of China well acquainted with her condition, whose prescription is more comprehensive than any of those which we have named. In their view, China needs Western culture, Western science, and what Mr. Meadows called "funded civilization." The Chinese have been a cultured nation for millenniums. They had already been civilized for ages, when our ancestors were rooting in the primeval forests. In China, if anywhere on the globe, that recipe has been faithfully tried. There is in culture as such, nothing of a reformatory nature. Culture is selfish. Its conscious or unconscious motto is "I, rather than you." As we daily perceive in China, where our boasted culture is scouted, there is no scorn like intellectual scorn. If Chinese culture has been unable to exert a due restraining influence upon those who have been so thoroughly steeped in it, is it probable that this result will be attained by a foreign exotic?

Of science, the Chinese are unquestionably in the greatest need. They need every modern science for the development of the still latent resources of their mighty Empire. This they are themselves beginning clearly to perceive, and will perceive still more clearly in the immediate future. But is it certain that an acquaintance with science will exert an advantageous moral influence over the Empire? What is the process by which this is to take place? No science lies nearer to our modern advancement, than chemistry. Would the spread of a general knowledge of chemistry in China, therefore, be a moral agency for regenerating the people? Would it not rather introduce new and unthought of possibilities of fraud and violence, throughout every department of life? Would it be quite safe, Chinese character being what

it is, to diffuse through the Empire together with an unlimited supply of chemicals, an exact formula for the preparation of every variety of modern explosives?

By "funded civilization" are meant the material results of the vast development of Western progress. It includes the manifold marvels resulting from steam and electricity. This, we are told, is what China really needs, and it is all that she needs. Railways from every city to every other city, steam navigation on her inland waters, a complete postal system, national banks, coined silver, telegraphs and telephones as nerves of connection, these are to be the visible signs of the new and happy day for China.

Perhaps this was the half-formed idea of Chang Chih-tung, when in his memorial on the subject of railways, he affirmed that they will do away with many risks incidental to river transport, "such as stealing by the crew." Will the accumulation, then, of funded civilization, diminish moral evils? Do railways ensure honesty in their employés, or even in their managers? Have we not read "A Chapter of Erie," showing how that great highway between States was stolen bodily, the stockholders helpless, and "nobody to blame"? And will they do these things better in China than it has as yet been possible to be sure of having them done in England or America? Is funded civilization an original cause by itself, or is it the effect of a long train of complex causes, working in slow harmony for great periods of time? Would the introduction of the ballot-box into China, make the Chinese a democratic people, and fit them for republican rule? No more will funded civilization produce in the Chinese Empire, those conditions which accompany it in the West, unless the causes which have produced the conditions in the West are set in motion to produce the like results in China. Those causes are not material, they are moral.

How is it that with the object lessons of Hongkong, of Shanghai, and other treaty ports before them, the Chinese do not introduce "model settlements" into the native cities of China? Because they do not wish for such changes, and would not tolerate them if they were introduced. How is it, that with the object-lesson of an honest administration of the Imperial Maritime Customs before their eyes, for more than a quarter of a century, the Government does not adopt such methods elsewhere? Because

in the present condition of China, the adoption of such methods of taxation of Chinese by Chinese, is an absolute moral impossibility. British character and conscience have been more than a thousand years in attaining their present development, and they cannot be suddenly taken up by the Chinese for their own, and set in operation, like a Krupp gun from Essen, mounted and ready to be discharged.

The forces which have developed character and conscience in the Anglo-Saxon race, are as definite and as certain facts of history, as the landing of Julius Cæsar in Britain, or the invasion of William the Conqueror. These forces came with Christianity, and they grew with Christianity. In proportion as Christianity roots itself in the popular heart, these products flourish, and not otherwise.

Listen for a moment to the great advocate of culture, Matthew Arnold. "Every educated man loves Greece, owes gratitude to Greece. Greece was the lifter-up to the nations of the banner of art and science, as Israel was the lifter-up of the banner of righteousness. Now the world cannot do without art and science. And the lifter-up of the banner of art and science was naturally much occupied with them, and conduct was a plain homely matter. And this brilliant Greece perished for lack of attention to *conduct;* for want of conduct, steadiness, character . . . . Nay, and the victorious revelation now, even now, in this age when more of beauty and more of knowledge are so much needed, and knowledge at any rate is so highly esteemed—the revelation which rules the world even now, is not Greece's revelation, but Judæa's; not the pre-eminence of art and science, but the pre-eminence of righteousness."

In order to reform China, the springs of character must be reached, and purified, conscience must be practically enthroned, and no longer imprisoned in its own palace, like the long line of Japanese Mikados. It is a truth well stated by one of the leading exponents of modern philosophy, that "*there is no alchemy by which to get golden conduct from leaden instincts.*" What China needs is righteousness, and in order to attain it, it is absolutely necessary that she have a clear perception, and a deep conviction that there is a "Power that makes for righteousness." The preception of such a power, gives a meaning to History, other

than that of a blind evolution of unknown and unpreventible causes. Marcus Aurelius expressed the feeling of the best part of Paganism, when he said in substance, "things are repeated over and over from eternity," "whatever happens, or is to happen, has in fact already been. It is only the same show repeated." But the thought of progress, toward an end divinely contemplated, by agencies of new and transcendent effectiveness, this was common to Christians and "it formed the contrast," as Neander has said, "between the Christian view of life, and the Pagan notion of a circle aimlessly repeating itself by a blind law of necessity." "Christianity to-day, to a greater extent than ever before, is the moulding force of civilization . . . . It has passed in fact, into the thought and life of the world; and all recent enterprize among the nations of Christendom, for physical advance, for legal reform, for just amendment of political conditions, takes impulse and courage from this hope of the future. The age is one 'impatient of Isthmuses.' It is equally impatient of mountain barriers, or of the obstacles to human intercourse interposed by winds and waves on the sea, by streams or desert-tracts on the land. And behind every drill which cuts the rock in the mountain tunnel, behind every engine which drives the ship against storm and tempest over the riotous fury of waves, or which propels the loaded train over alkali plains and rocky crests, is this invisible force of the spirit which since the new religion came, has expected a future to be wrought out by it, conformable to it, its ultimate crown of earthly glory."* The manifold needs of China, we find then to be a single imperative need. It will be met permanently, completely, only, by *Christian Civilization.*

* *The Divine Origin of Christianity*, by R. S. Storrs, D.D.

THE END.

INDEX.

C.

P.

S.

T.

V.

W.

Y.

ERRATA.

Page.	*For*	*Read*
3,	every considerable,	very considerable.
12,	Turkisk,	Turkish.
38,	over nighty,	over ninety.
56,	reasonsble,	reasonable.
70, 71,	la-pa-chiu,	la-pa-chou.
74,	gives places,	gives place.
82,	ever to many tens,	ever so many tens.
88,	as you say,	as you said.
92,	if worst can do worst,	if worst came to worst.
103,	graceful easy,	graceful ease.
104,	their direction,	the direction.
113,	whatever he may be,	whatever it may be.
114,	a family compels,	a famine compels.
125,	redicule,	ridicule.
131, 133,	educated Chinese,	uneducated Chinese.
138,	with regard of the powers,	with regard to the, &c.
142,	Emperar,	Emperor.
156,	in leads to those,	it leads to those.
158,	introduce telegrams,	introduce telegraphs.
159,	sensative,	sensitive.
163,	striking a cash.	sticking a cash.
165,	keed winged torments,	keep, &c.
166,	enevitable,	inevitable.
168 (Note),	they are not extremely,	they are not only extremely, &c.
171,	doubly are on,	doubly sure on.
173,	more of less difficult,	more or less, &c.
183,	since than,	since then.
186,	discrimitating,	discriminating.
200,	to dispense with the dispensable,	to dispense with the indispensable.
204,	the rest of his countrymen, since,	the rest of his countrymen since.
206,	another lad to the same dynasty,	another lad of the same.
209,	eloquent formulas,	elegant formulas.
212,	equally simply,	equally simple.
215,	greet friend,	greet a friend.
227,	an expected confirmation,	an unexpected, &c.
231,	some kind of a grandmother,	some kind of a grandfather.
250,	wholly surpressed,	wholly suppressed.
254,	*the exception,*	*the excepting.*
261,	envolope,	envelope.
266,	it is reasonable theory,	it is a reasonable, &c.
266,	Ja-pei,	Ju-pei.
267,	and no reference whatever to the morality,	with no reference whatever.
281,	has never made,	has never been made.
282,	the results of this state of things,	the result, &c.
284,	their was not enough,	there was not enough.

Page.	*For*	*Read*
285,	susperficial,	superficial.
306,	it well illustrated,	is well illustrated.
316,	carefully attended,	carefully tended.
316,	Mau-tzu,	Miao-tzu.
317,	from Chefoo to Swatow,	from Canton to Swatow.
356,	call ti,	call it.
360 (Note),	practically different,	radically different.
365,	docorum,	decorum.
373,	to heretical,	to be heretical.
393,	Chinese drive,	Chineses drive.
397,	apperently,	apparently.